

A
PRACTICAL DISCOURSE
CONCERNING A
FUTURE JUDGMENT.



A

PRACTICAL DISCOURSE

CONCERNING A

FUTURE JUDGMENT,

UNDER THE FOLLOWING HEADS; *VIZ.*

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| <p>I. THE PROOF OF A FUTURE JUDGMENT.</p> <p>II. CONCERNING THE TIME OF JUDGMENT.</p> <p>III. WHO SHALL BE OUR JUDGE, <i>viz.</i> THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.</p> <p>IV. THE MANNER AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF CHRIST'S APPEARANCE, AND THE AWFUL SOLEMNITIES OF JUDGMENT.</p> | <p>V. WHO ARE TO BE JUDGED; <i>viz.</i> THE WORLD, OR ALL MANKIND.</p> <p>VI. FOR WHAT WE SHALL BE JUDGED.</p> <p>VII. CONCERNING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE FUTURE JUDGMENT, AND THE RULE WHEREBY WE SHALL BE JUDGED.</p> <p>VIII. THE CONCLUSION.</p> |
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BY WILLIAM SHERLOCK, D. D.

LATE DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S.

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TO THE
QUEEN'S
MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

May it please Your MAJESTY,

TO accept of this Treatise; a small part of which being preached in your Royal Chapel, Your Majesty was pleased to excuse the printing of it then, that it might wait for the publication of the whole, which Your Majesty was given to understand I intended; which I now humbly present to Your Sacred Majesty, rejoicing that I have so good an occasion of acknowledging Your great and undeserved favours to me; and of professing, with all the sincerity that the subject of this Treatise requires, that I am

Your MAJESTY'S

Most humble and most obedient

subject and servant,

WILLIAM SHERLOCK.



THE CONTENTS.

THE Introduction : containing a distribution of the work. Page 9

CHAP. I.

The proof of a future Judgment.	10
SECT. I. That man is by nature an accountable creature.	11
SECT. II. The essential differences between good and evil, and the natural notions we have of God, prove a future Judgment.	16
SECT. III. The external appearances of Providence prove a future Judgment.	22
SECT. IV. The natural presages of conscience prove a future Judgment; and if there be a future state, there must be a future Judgment.	45
SECT. V. The Scripture-proof of a future Judgment.	51
SECT. VI. The improvements of this doctrine in some particular inferences; as, 1. To live as it becomes those who shall certainly be judged. 2. To keep our eye upon a future Judgment for the government of our lives.	59
SECT. VII. Third inference: to refer all judgment to God.	67
SECT. VIII. Fourth inference: to refer all difficulties to the day of Judgment.	77
SECT. IX. Fifth inference: to affect our souls with a strong, and vigorous, and constant sense of Judgment.	85

CHAP. II.

Concerning the time of Judgment.	93
SECT. I. Concerning a particular Judgment at the time of every man's death.	<i>ib.</i>
SECT. II. That the day of Judgment is appointed.	103
SECT. III. The day God has appointed is a general day of Judgment.	112
SECT. IV. The day of Judgment is at the end of the world.	122

CHAP. III.

Who shall be our Judge; viz, the Man Christ Jesus.	131
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THE CONTENTS.

CHAP. IV.

The manner and circumstances of Christ's appearance, and the awful solemnities of Judgment. Page 145

CHAP. V.

Who are to be judged; viz. The world, or all mankind. 155

CHAP. VI.

For what we shall be judged. 173

CHAP. VII.

Concerning the righteousness of the future Judgment, and the rule whereby we shall be judged. 188

The CONCLUSION.

How to know what our sentence will be at the last Judgment: with an exhortation to reverence our own consciences. 221



145
155
173
188
221

A PRACTICAL DISCOURSE *concerning* *a FUTURE JUDGMENT.*

ACTS XVII. 31.

Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

THE INTRODUCTION.

HAVING, in a former Treatise, discoursed largely concerning Death, the next thing to be considered is Judgment; for so the Apostle tells us, "After death the judgment," *Heb. ix. 27.* And a very grave and serious thought it is, if ever men will be serious: for nothing can be of greater concernment to us than a future judgment, which will determine our final state and condition to eternity.

In treating on this subject, I shall observe this method:

I. Inquire what assurance we have of a future judgment.

II. The time when this judgment shall be: God "hath appointed a day" for it.

III. Who shall be our judge: "God will judge the world," but not immediately by himself, but "by that man whom he hath ordained;" that is, by Christ Jesus, who is a man, and the son of man, as well as the eternal Son of God.

IV. The public and awful solemnities of judgment.

V. The persons who shall be judged, "the world," or all mankind.

VI. For what we shall be judged, "whatever we have done in this body, whether it be good or bad."

VII. The rule whereby we shall be judged, and the righteousness of the judgment.

C H A P. I.

The proof of a future Judgment.

IN treating of death, there was no need to prove that all men must die, for this is too visible to be denied; but judgment is not seen, nor can it be seen, because it is not yet: could men indeed look into the other world, they would soon be convinced, by the different state of good and bad men there, that God has appointed a day for judgment; but that is an invisible state to us, and the thoughts of judgment are so uneasy to bad men now, that they are very unwilling to believe it; and this makes it necessary to lay the foundation of all in the proof of a future judgment.

Now, there are two ways of proving this: First, by the principles of reason. Secondly, by revelation. By reason we can prove that God will judge the world, as that signifies that God will call all men to an account for their actions, and that he will reward good men, and punish the wicked, in the next world. This the Heathens themselves discovered by the light of nature; they talked very much of the infernal judges, and of the rewards and punishments of good and bad men after death; and therefore, in this sense, did believe a future judgment: but yet the revelation of the gospel has given us a more plain and undeniable assurance of this, and has discovered something more than the light of nature could discover. The light of nature and reason may satisfy us, as it did the Heathens, that God will reward good men, and punish the wicked, in the next world; but it could not tell us that God had appointed a general day of judgment, wherein all the dead shall rise again out of their graves, and re-assume their bodies, and be summoned to judgment; it could not tell us who shall be our Judge, with what glory and majesty he shall appear, and with what pomp and awful and terrible solemnities he shall judge us. The world knew nothing of this before the gospel was preached; for it depends wholly upon the will and pleasure of God, and therefore can be known only by revelation.

I shall begin with the proofs from reason, and show you what moral evidence and assurance we have that God will judge the world, as that signifies, that he will reward good men, and punish the wicked, in the next world: and this proof consists of several branches; and though each particular, considered apart by itself, may not be thought sufficient, yet if we unite them into one, and take them in their natural order, they add such light and strength to each other, that I persuade myself they will convince any man of a future judgment, who is not obstinately resolved against this belief.



S E C T. I.

That man is by nature an accountable creature.

FIRST then, I observe, That the very make, and frame, and condition, of human nature proves that man is an accountable creature, who can give an account of his actions, and therefore may be called to an account for them; and that is a strong presumption that he will be called to an account; that is, that he will be judged. There are four things necessary to make any being accountable: 1. That he have a principle of reason to know what he does, and to judge for himself. 2. That he have a rule to live by, to direct him what to do, and what to avoid. 3. That he have liberty of choice, and the free government of his own actions. 4. That he be an inferior and subordinate creature, who has some above him to call him to an account.

1st, As for the first, We know a beast, which is governed by instinct, not by reason, cannot be judged, because such brute creatures know not what they do, and therefore can give no account what they do; which is the case of infants; also of fools and madmen, who must be governed that they may do no hurt, but cannot be judged: but a reasonable creature, as man is, who knows what he does, and can judge of his own actions, may be judged for them too.

2^{dly}, Where there is no rule to live by, there is nothing to be judged for; when nothing is commanded, and nothing forbid, all actions are alike indifferent, and in this case there is no other rule but for every man to please himself, and to do what he likes best; and he who does so gives a good account of himself, and cannot be blamed for it. If there were no rule of good and evil, there could be no place for rewards or punishments, and consequently no place for judgment: but when we have a rule to live by, as all mankind have, either the laws of Nature, or the revealed will of God, we may do either good or evil, and may deserve either rewards or punishments, and then we may be judged too.

3^{dly}, Whatever being acts by necessity or fate, not by choice, is no more capable of being judged than the winds and seas are, or any other natural and necessary causes; for where there is no choice there is neither moral good nor evil. But man is a free agent, who not only knows the difference between good and evil, but can chuse the good and refuse the evil; and therefore he is capable of praise or blame, of rewards or punishments, for the good or evil which he does; that is, he may be called to an account, and be judged for what he does.

Especially, 4^{thly}, If he be an inferior and subordinate creature, who has a superior to judge him: to judge indeed is an act of superior au-

thority and power, and therefore those who have none above them cannot be judged; but an inferior is, by the condition of his nature, or circumstances of life, obnoxious to the judgment of his superiors; for the very notion of a superior and inferior signifies to govern, and to be governed; to judge, and to be judged. An inferior is obnoxious to the judgment of his superior, who may judge him if he pleases: and this is the condition of all mankind, if we believe that there is a God above us, who is our natural Lord.

So that man, by his very nature and condition, was made to be judged; which is a very good argument that he shall be judged, if we will but allow that God will govern all creatures according to their natures; which is essential to the wisdom and justice of his government. As, to take a particular review of this matter:

1. If it be naturally decent and fitting that a reasonable creature should give a reason of his actions, why should we doubt whether the wise Governor of the world will require a reason of him, and call him to an account? Reason makes us capable of giving an account of our actions; and, which is more than that, it makes us sensible that we ought to give an account; our own minds exact an account of us, and when we cannot give a good account to ourselves we blush alone, when no body sees us; nay, reason makes us so liable to give an account, that it requires no authority to ask it, it is what we owe to all mankind, and the meanest man may expect it from us as well as our judge; and when we cannot give a reasonable account of our actions, a child or beggar shall shame and confound us, whatever our quality or character be. And it would seem strange, if reason should make us accountable to all the world but only to God, who is the sovereign Lord of all; that God should make us accountable to ourselves, and to all other reasonable beings, but not to himself.

2. If God hath given man a rule of life, and a natural measure of good and evil, can it be thought that he will require no account of him, whether he keeps or breaks these laws? For to what purpose then did he give them? How contemptible are laws without a sanction, or a sanction without a judge to dispense rewards and punishments? To give laws without taking notice how they are observed, or punishing the breach of them, is so very absurd, that no human government was ever wholly guilty of such folly; and why should we charge God with such absurdities in government as would be ridiculous in men? If we will but allow God as much wisdom and discretion as an earthly prince, we may certainly conclude, that if he have given laws to men, he will judge them by those laws.

3. There is no way of governing a free agent, as man is, but by hopes and fears, by rewards and punishments; for force and violence

is not the government of a free agent, because it destroys its liberty; so that if God governs mankind at all, he must judge them; that is, he must reward or punish them according to the good or evil they do: and though this does not directly and immediately prove a future judgment, yet it is a fair step towards it, as will appear more hereafter: all that I desire to conclude from hence, at present, is only this, That if God govern men like reasonable creatures, he must judge them; and if we have as great assurance that God will judge the world as we have that he governs it, there is an end to this dispute, to men who believe a God and a Providence.

Nay, indeed we need only to suppose that man was made by a wise being to prove that he shall be judged; *i. e.* that he shall be rewarded or punished for all the good or evil that he does in the world; for a wise being will take care to govern the creatures which he makes, and to govern them in such a way as is agreeable to the nature he hath given them; and since man, who is a free agent, can be governed only by hopes and fears, God would never have made man, had he not intended to judge him; that is, he would never have made such a creature as can be governed only by the hope of rewards, and by the fear of punishments, had he not resolved to lay these restraints upon him to reward and punish him according to his works. How necessary rewards and punishments are to the government of mankind we see in human societies, which cannot subsist without them. Notwithstanding the severest laws, and the severest executions, every age and every country produces great prodigies of wickedness, which, no doubt, would be much greater, and more numerous, were there no laws and government to restrain them. And when the universal experience of mankind convinces the world of the necessity of laws and government, why should we think that the wise Maker of man should not over-awe him also with a sense of his own power and justice, which is a more effectual restraint than the rods and axes of princes?

4. Thus, if man, by the condition of his nature, be an inferior depending creature, he is by nature accountable to God, who is his sovereign Lord; and this is a good argument that he must give an account of himself to God: for there is no reason to think that God will not call man to an account, when he has made him by nature accountable to himself; for the nature of things is the most certain rule to know how God will govern them; at least the nature of things is a strong presumption, unless there be plain and positive evidence to the contrary. He who acknowledges that man is by nature an inferior creature, who is accountable to God for all his actions, must reasonably take it for granted, without any farther proof, that God will judge him, and call him to an account; for God has declared his intention

to judge him, by making him such a creature as is to be judged: and there is no pretence and shew of reason to say, that God will not take an account of man, whom he has by nature made an accountable creature, unless we can produce a plain and express revelation of God's will, that he will not judge mankind. No man can prove by reason that God will not judge mankind; for no reason can be good against the nature of things, and the nature of things does most reasonably prove a judgment; and therefore we ought to take it for granted that God will judge the world, till we see a plain revelation that he will not.

This is worth observing, because it puts the proof upon those who deny a judgment where in reason it ought to lie: for those who have the reason and nature of things on their side have as good natural evidence as they can have, and need seek no farther; but those who will believe contrary to the nature of things, ought to prove their exemption from the laws and condition of their nature.

I desire you seriously to consider this, and to lay it to heart, for it is a very sensible argument, and, if well managed, will convince you how foolish and unreasonable all your hopes are of escaping the judgment of God, unless you have some secret revelation of this, which the rest of mankind know nothing of. To represent this as plainly and familiarly as I can, give me leave to ask you some few questions, or rather seriously ask yourselves such questions as these:

Why do I hope that God will not judge me? Am I not obnoxious to the judgment of God? Am I not his creature, and is he not my sovereign Lord? And is he not then my Judge? And why should I expect that my natural Lord and Judge will not judge me? Do not parents judge their children, and masters their servants, and princes their subjects, and all superiors their inferiors; and can I think that God alone, who is the sovereign Lord of all, and from whom all inferior power and authority is derived, should not himself judge his creatures? Has God renounced his authority, or is the exercise of it too troublesome to him? Has he made us accountable creatures but to give no account? Has he made us in subjection to himself to exercise no authority over us? We had better say that God had made us all sovereign, independent, unaccountable creatures, which is less absurd than to say, that God is our sovereign Lord, but will not judge us, that is, will not exercise his sovereign authority.

All this seems to be self-evident, and to carry its own proof and conviction with it; and there is but one evasion that I know of, by the help of which men flatter themselves still into the opinion that God will not judge them, or, at least, that it is not evident from the light of nature that he will; and that is, that all this proves indeed that

God may judge us if he please, but not that he will: we are his creatures, and obnoxious to his power and justice, and this proves that he may judge us if he please; but he is under no force, and therefore if he please also he may not judge us; and while this is possible, men who love their sins are apt to flatter themselves that God will not judge them.

Now, this is no objection to us Christians, who have a plain and express revelation of God's will in this point, that he will judge the world, though it is an additional satisfaction to see that the nature and reason of things do so well agree with revelation: but however, at present I shall set aside revelation, and consider whether what I have now discoursed does not as well prove that God *will*, as that he *may*, judge the world.

Now to prove this, I will only suppose one principle, which I will thank no man to grant me; That what the reason and nature of things proves ought to be done, that God will do; for though God is under no force and necessity, yet his own nature is a rule and law to him. What ought to be done, every wise and good and just being will do, and therefore God will certainly do it, who is infinite Wisdom; and what the nature of things requires to be done, that is the prescription of his own wisdom, for he made all things, and therefore, by giving such natures to his creatures, he has made a law for himself, and sufficiently declared what he intends to do. Now, let any man consider what I have already discoursed, and tell me, whether a reasonable creature, who is a free agent, and under the power and authority of a superior, who prescribes him the laws and rules of action, ought not to be called to an account for his actions; whether a wise father, or a wise prince, would not do this; and whether it be not a great neglect and fault in the superior if it be not done? I am sure all mankind would think so; and then we must grant, that the state and condition of human nature proves, that God not only may, but will, judge the world; unless we can suppose that he will be guilty of such a neglect as would be thought a great fault among men.

There are some things indeed which we cannot know that God will do without a revelation; such free and arbitrary acts of goodness, as he had no way obliged himself to, nor had given any natural notice of, such as is the whole economy of man's salvation by Jesus Christ; but what either his own nature, or the nature of things which he has made, exacts from him, that we may be sure a wise and just and good being will do.

For though God is under no force and constraint, yet he must, because he will, act agreeably to his own nature, and to the nature of things; and we may as well say that we are not sure that God will do

what is good, and just, and wise, because he is under no force to do it, as that he will not judge mankind: for to judge the world is as essential to the sovereignty of God as to do what is wise and good is to his wisdom and goodness: and it is absurd to say that God is the sovereign Lord of the world, but need not exercise his sovereign authority in governing or judging mankind, as to say, that God is infinite wisdom and goodness, but need never do what is wise or good. Such dormant and unactive perfections are a contradiction to the very notion of a God, whose nature is a pure and simple act, all life and energy; if he be good, he will do good; and if he be the sovereign Lord and Judge of the world, he will govern and judge mankind.

This is the first natural evidence of a future judgment, taken from the frame and condition of human nature; which I have insisted on much longer than I intended; for the more I think of it the more plain and convincing it seems to be: for what imaginable reason is there to question whether God will judge mankind, when he has made man just such a creature as he must have made him if he had intended to judge him; endowed him with reason and understanding, and liberty of choice, given him laws and rules of action, and made him in subjection to himself, obnoxious to his own power and justice? which are plain natural indications that God does intend to call him to an account.

S E C T. II.

The essential differences between good and evil, and the natural notions we have of God, prove a future Judgment.

II. **T**HE essential differences between good and evil prove that mankind ought to be judged; and this is somewhat more than that God has made man such a creature as is by nature accountable, and may be judged: just as much more as the difference is between *may* be and *must* be: for though, as I observed before, this *may be* does very strongly infer a *will be*; that is, that God having made man an accountable creature is a reasonable presumption that he will judge him, and call him to an account; yet this is not so direct and immediate a proof that God will judge mankind, as it is to show, that the essential difference of good and evil makes it necessary that man should be judged, that he should be rewarded and punished according to his works.

I premise this, to show you what a new advance this makes towards the proof of a future judgment; and now come to explain the force of this argument.

That there is an essential difference between good and evil, (as unwilling as some men are to own it), is demonstrable to every man's sense and experience; which is a more undeniable proof than some nice and metaphysical speculations; and that what is good ought to be rewarded, and what is evil ought to be punished, is acknowledged by the universal consent and practice of mankind; and I think the necessary and unavoidable consequence of this is, that good men shall be rewarded, and the wicked punished; that is, that all mankind shall be judged according to their works. This is in short the argument; and if I can make good each part of it, I have no more to do, but to leave it to your serious consideration.

I. That there is an essential difference between good and evil; that is, that there are some things in their own natures very good for men, and other things which are very hurtful to them: and will any man deny this? This is the good and evil which is in the nature of things, and so immutably there, that all the art and power of the world can never alter them without altering the nature of things; cannot make that good which is hurtful, nor that hurtful which is good; which is all the good and evil which I know of: for whereas we distinguish between moral and natural good and evil, the only difference between them is this, that moral good and evil is in the will and choice, natural good and evil is in the nature of things; that which is good or hurtful to ourselves or others is naturally good or evil; to love to chuse to do that which is good or hurtful to ourselves or others is morally good or evil, or is the good or evil of our choice and actions.

If you will but recollect yourselves, you will all find that you have no other notion of good or evil but this. When you say such a man has done a very good or a very evil action, what do you mean by it? Do you not mean that he has done something very good or very hurtful to himself or others? When you hear that any man has done good or evil, is not the next question, What good or what hurt has he done? And do you not by this mean natural good or evil? which is a plain evidence that you judge of the moral good or evil of actions by the natural good or evil which they do: and the essential difference between moral good and evil is founded on the essential difference between natural good and evil; and therefore is as unalterable as the nature of things.

This is evident from that universal rule of justice and goodness, "Whatever ye would that men should do unto you, do you that also unto them;" which is an appeal to our own sense and feeling for the good and evil of our actions; which must therefore signify the natural good and evil of them: we feel what is for our good or hurt, and we desire men should do good to us, but that they should not hurt us;

and therefore we must do good and no injury to them; and this is the sum of the law and the prophets, the universal rule of moral justice and goodness, which is to do that which is for the natural good of mankind, whatever our sense and experience tells us is naturally good and beneficial to ourselves; which would be a very imperfect rule, if there were not an inseparable connexion between moral and natural good.

The not observing this is the true reason why some men can form no notion at all of moral good or evil, but think virtue and vice to be mere arbitrary notions, which have no foundation in the nature of things; as indeed they can have none, but only this, that virtue is to love, and chuse, and do, that which has a natural good in it, which is good to ourselves or others; that vice is to love, and chuse, and do, that which has some natural evil in it, or which is hurtful to ourselves or others. As for instance; charity, which is one of the most excellent virtues of the Christian life, consists in doing every thing which is for the good of men; in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, relieving the injured and oppressed, the fatherless and the widow; in directing, advising, assisting, comforting, men in difficulties and distress; in forgiving injuries, concealing faults, judging charitably, and in all such other acts of goodness as are greatly for the benefit of mankind: whereas the contrary vice does all the contrary evils and mischiefs, to the great hurt and injury of men. And whoever considers this, must confess that moral good and evil is as real a thing as natural good and evil is; and I suppose no man, who has his senses about him, will deny that there is such a thing as natural good and evil; as for instance, pain and pleasure; and then his same senses will, in abundance of instances, tell him the essential difference between moral good and evil.

On the other hand, the true and only reason why men so vastly differ in their notions of moral good and evil is, because in many instances they are not agreed what natural good and evil is. Some men call nothing good or evil but what is good or evil to their bodies, such as pain and pleasure, and the causes and instruments of them, health and sickness, riches and poverty, and the like. Others think, and with much greater reason, that we should take our souls into the account too; that whatever is for the ease and pleasure of our minds, whatever adorns and perfects a reasonable nature, is a natural good to men; as wisdom and knowledge, and regular and well-governed appetites and passions do; and therefore these are the foundation of moral virtues too: but whatever debases our natures, and is a reproach to the reason and understanding of a man, whatever thrusts him down into the rank of brute creatures, and either disturbs his ease, or changes the pleasures of a man for those of a beast, are great natural evils too, if the per-

fection and happiness of human nature be a natural good; and therefore to chuse, and to act such things, is morally evil.

This is enough to show what moral good and evil is; that it has a necessary relation to natural good and evil; and it were easy here to prove, were it not a too long digression, that all the laws of the gospel do either command what is for the good and happiness of mankind, of every private man, and of public communities; or forbid such things as are hurtful and prejudicial to them: but my present design will not suffer me to straggle so far out of the way.

II. The second branch of this argument is, that, according to the general sense of mankind, what is good ought to be rewarded, and what is wicked ought to be punished.

For the proof of this, I shall appeal, in the first place, to all civilized nations, who live under laws and government; for there is no such nation but thinks fit to restrain wickedness by a public vengeance on those who commit it: indeed their laws and punishments are not always the same, nor do they all punish the same crimes, nor with the same punishments; but all of them punish such crimes as they think injurious to the public, which is the principal concernment of civil government; and inflict such penalties on them as they judge proportioned to such crimes, or sufficient to restrain the commission of them; some capital, some pecuniary mulcts, confiscation of goods, loss of honour, corporal punishments, imprisonment, banishment, or some public marks of perpetual infamy; which is a certain argument that the wisdom of all nations thinks it fit that wickedness should be punished; that those who do evil should suffer evil: and, indeed, all mankind is so sensible of this, that there is not a greater reproach to any government than the impunity of vice, nor a greater glory to it than the strict and equal administration of justice.

Where public justice fails, as it does in a great many instances, we must next appeal to private revenge, to understand what the sense of mankind is about the desert of sin; for there is not a more natural nor more eager passion in human nature: all men naturally desire to return the injury they suffer upon the heads of those who do it; and account it no injury, but a great act of justice, to do so. In many nations some private injuries have been left to private revenge; and the Jewish law itself permitted a retaliation of injuries, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, though it did not permit the injured person to take this revenge himself, but made the public magistrate the judge of it.

It may be, you will wonder I should appeal to the impatient thirst and appetite of revenge to prove the sense of mankind that sin ought to be punished, when private revenge itself is a great evil, and forbid

by the gospel of our Saviour. But for all that, revenge is a natural passion, and speaks the furious rage and language of nature, that sin ought to be punished. It is that passion in us which ministers to punitive justice, as a natural tenderness and compassion does to charity; and therefore the passion itself is not sinful, though the irregular exercise of it is: it is implanted in all mankind, as the love of justice is; but all men must not execute revenge no more than every man can administer justice: where every man is a minister of justice, he may execute his revenge too; that is, where there are no public laws and government; but when we are incorporated into civil societies, private revenge is superseded by public justice, and to revenge ourselves is an offence against the state. But this public justice is executing revenge still, though without the partiality and passion which men betray in their own cause: and though our Saviour forbids private revenge, it is not because sin does not deserve to be punished, but to teach us those great Christian virtues of patience and forgiveness, and loving enemies; leaving vengeance to God, who is the just Judge of the world: "for vengeance is mine, I will repay it, saith the Lord;" which supposes that vengeance is due to sin, though Christ requires his disciples to leave it to public magistrates, or to God, who is the Judge of the world.

As for those sins which are not so properly the objects either of public or private revenge, as doing no direct nor immediate injury to any but those who commit them; such as gluttony, drunkenness, prodigality, sloth, idleness; a vagrant, useless, fantastical life, and the like; besides some gentle restraints which public laws lay on them, they have this punishment, that they make men contemptible and infamous, neglected and disregarded, as a reproach to human nature, and useless members of the commonwealth: and such public infamy is a very great punishment; for it is one of the worst ingredients in all public punishments.

This, I think, shows what the sense of mankind is about the desert of sin, that punishment is its just due; and they have given very ample testimonies also to the merits of virtue: for though there are no laws to reward a private virtue as there are to punish vice, yet public honours, by the consent of mankind, are thought the just rewards of an eminent virtue. This has procured the favour of the people, and advanced such deserving men to the highest places of trust and dignity in the commonwealth. When such men are advanced, it is with a public applause, as due to them; no man envies their greatness, or grudges to come behind them: whereas public honours are thought misplaced on bad men, and sit so ill-favouredly on them, as exposes them to public scorn and envy. Let us then sum up this argument,

and consider the just consequences of it: there is an essential difference between virtue and vice; and according to the sense of all mankind, virtue deserves to be rewarded, and wickedness punished; and can we think then, that if God governs the world, he will not judge mankind, that he will not reward the good, and punish the wicked? Has he implanted a natural principle of revenge and justice in men, and taught them to erect public courts of justice for the punishment of vice, and will he not punish it himself? Has he given such a natural grace and beauty to virtue, as attracts to itself the love, the praise, the admiration, the rewards, of men, and will he himself have no regard for it? Has he made vice infamous and contemptible, and will he cast no shame, no reproach, on it? Would not the very order of nature complain of this, should the God of nature have no regard to it?

For we must observe, that according to the general sense of mankind, virtue and vice deserve to be rewarded and punished, not only by men, but by God too. This is the foundation of that terrible objection against Providence, that good men are many times great sufferers in this world, and the wicked very prosperous; which supposes, that if God govern the world, he must punish bad men, and reward the good, because the nature of things requires it, and he cannot be a just governor if he does not: and either men ought never more to make this objection against Providence, or they must allow, that if there be a God, he will judge the world. And indeed there is much more reason to expect this from God than from men; especially since the administration of justice among men is so corrupt, imperfect, or defective, that neither virtue nor vice will ever have their just rewards, unless he take it into his own hands. And this brings me to a third branch of this argument for a future judgment.

III. That the natural notions we have of God prove that he will judge the world. All men who believe a God acknowledge him to be the Sovereign Lord of the world, infinitely wise, holy, good, and just; now it seems impossible to me (though we had no revelation of his will what he would do) that such a Being as this should not judge the world. As to consider this matter particularly, but very briefly.

I If he be the sovereign Lord of the world, then he has power and authority to judge; nay, there is no other being hath power and authority to judge the world but himself; that if he will not judge the world, the world can never be judged. And yet, as I have already proved, the essential differences of good and evil necessarily require that men should be judged, that good men should be rewarded, and the wicked punished; and if there must be a judgment, then God, who is the sovereign Lord, and the only Judge of the

world, must judge mankind : if judgment be necessary as the nature of things proves, and as the general consent and unbiaſſed reaſon of mankind agree it is, if we cannot hence conclude that God will judge the world, I am ſure we can never know any thing certainly of God by reaſon; for there is nothing which reaſon concludes more expreſſly and poſitively than this.

2. As for the other attributes and perfections of the Divine nature, ſuch as wiſdom, holineſs, goodneſs, juſtice, if God be the ſovereign Lord of the world, we muſt conſider them as the attributes of a Sovereign; it is the wiſdom, the holineſs, the goodneſs, the juſtneſs, of a ſovereign Lord : and therefore the proper exerciſe of theſe attributes in God conſiſts in the exerciſe of a ſovereign authority and power; that is, in governing and judging mankind wiſely, holily, with goodneſs and juſtice. And this certainly proves that God, as a ſovereign Lord, does govern and judge the world; for he cannot exerciſe his wiſdom, or holineſs, or goodneſs, or juſtice, as Sovereign, if he exerciſes no acts of ſovereignty: he cannot judge wiſely, holily, righteouſly, if he does not judge at all; and therefore, though he be wiſe, and holy, and juſt, and good, yet he is not a wiſe, and holy, and juſt, and good ſovereign; for as Sovereign he exerciſes none of theſe attributes if he does not judge the world, if he does not reward good men, nor puniſh the wicked; which the wiſdom, the holineſs, the goodneſs, of a ſovereign requires. And therefore, if the natural notion all mankind have of God joins his ſovereignty with his other attributes, as it muſt do, unleſs we can divide God from himſelf; that he is not only a wiſe, and holy, and juſt, and good Being, but that he is a wiſe, and holy, and juſt, and good ſovereign Lord of the world; we muſt confeſs that God does govern the world, and diſplay all theſe attributes and perfections in the government of it. I might add a great deal more upon this argument, but this is ſo very plain and demonſtrative that there is no need of it.

S E C T. III.

The external appearances of Providence prove a future Judgment.

III. **A**S the natural notions we have of God prove that he will judge the world, ſo the external appearances of Providence prove that God does judge the world at preſent, and that he will judge it hereafter : for the providence of God does very often make ſuch a remarkable difference between good and bad men in this world, as is ſufficient to ſatiſfy us that God does govern and judge mankind at preſent; and yet the preſent adminiſtrations of Providence do not

always make a sufficient distinction between good and bad men in this world, good men being very often afflicted and bad men prosperous; which gives us a reasonable expectation of a more just and righteous tribunal in the world to come, where rewards and punishments shall be more equally dispensed.

But to discourse this more particularly; I observe, that the external appearances of Providence prove that God does govern and judge the world at present as much as is necessary to the ends of government in this world. I confess, did it appear that God took no care of the government of the world at present, I should very much question whether he would judge the world hereafter: but when there are plain and evident proofs, that a wise and just Providence does govern the world; that God makes such a difference at present between good and bad men, as the good government of this world requires; this is a sufficient reason to expect a more exact, impartial, universal judgment of good and bad men in the next world. To state this matter plainly, and to make a very sensible argument of it, I shall, *1st*, Show you what evidence we have of a divine Justice and Providence which governs the world at present. *2^{dly}*, The force of this consequence, from the providence of God in this world, to a judgment in the next.

1st, What evidence we have of a divine Justice and Providence which governs the world; and I shall begin,

1. With that divine justice which is interwoven in the nature of things: for if God has so contrived the nature of things, that wickedness is a punishment to itself and wicked men a plague and scourge to each other, it is plain demonstration, that when God made man, he intended to govern him too since he has annexed such natural rewards or punishments to a virtuous or vicious life: I am sure this is as good an argument for Providence as the wise contrivance of things is for God's making the world. We think it very absurd to say that the world was made by chance, or without a wise Creator, when there is such admirable art and curiosity in the make of the meanest creature as the wisest philosophers are not able to understand, much less to imitate. And if all human art and philosophy cannot make a fly, nor so much as understand the make of it, how can we possibly imagine that such a world as this, which consists of such infinite variety of creatures, and every creature made up of so many natural wonders, and all so admirably fitted to each other, as to make up an uniform, regular, and beautiful world, should own any other author but an infinite wise and perfect Being, who has all power and all possible ideas of usefulness and beauty? that is to say, Since there are such apparent characters and impressions of an excellent and unsearchable wisdom in the frame of the world, a wise Being must be the maker of it. And is it not as good

an argument, that if human nature be so contrived, that man, who is a free agent, shall be happy or miserable as he is good or bad; that God made him to be governed, and therefore intended to govern him, nay, did more than intend it, for he contrived his nature so as to govern it himself? For though he has made him a free agent, yet he has left nothing at his liberty but whether he will be happy or miserable; the one he must be, and he may indeed chuse which he will: but there could not be a greater natural restraint upon a free agent than to make happiness or misery the reward of his choice, especially since nature teaches all mankind to love themselves, and to be happy if they can.

That this is so, is so evident to our very senses, that it is a good subject to declaim on, but needs no proof. What is there that can make any man miserable in this world which is not the natural and necessary effect of some sin or other?

Will irregular and furious passions make a man miserable? a confounding shame, distracting and terrifying fears, raging anger, malice, revenge, great perplexity, solicitude, anxiety of thoughts? If the pain and torment of mind is misery, these passions must make men miserable. Now all these are the passions of a sinful mind, sin is the parent and the nurse of them. A virtuous man, who always takes care to do his duty, and what becomes him, knows not what shame means: if he be slandered, reproached, and vilified, he may blush a little to be thought a bad man, but his own conscience does not reproach him. Nothing is truly infamous but what is wicked, and therefore shame can never disturb an innocent and virtuous mind. Good men may be afraid of some temporal evils and calamities, but it is sin which distracts men with guilty fears which are so unsupportable to human nature. Nay, when our worldly fears are excessive and tormenting, they are raised and aggravated by some vice or other, either by too great a passion and fondness for this world, or a distrust of the Divine providence and protection, which is the true cause also of that thoughtfulness, anxiety, and solicitude, which the love of riches, and the fear of losing such uncertain treasures, create. A raging anger, malice, revenge, is owing to self-love, pride, covetousness, injustice, and such other vices as make men injurious to each other, and impatient of injuries. Man had been a stranger to all these troublesome tormenting passions had he continued innocent. And whoever would enjoy peace and contentment and satisfaction of mind, quiet and easy and cheerful passions, must root out those vices which make such a ferment, and raise such unnatural tempests in our breasts.

Is pain and sickness, poverty and disgrace, an untimely or infamous death, a great punishment to men? These would be the punishments of some kinds and degrees of sin, though neither God nor men should judge

sinners. Drunkenness and gluttony and lust will destroy our health, and afflict us with tormenting diseases, and shorten our lives and waste our estates, and make us infamous : if you want a proof of this, go visit the hospitals and the gaols, see the miserable spectacles of rottenness and poverty there, and inquire into the causes of them, and how many martyrs and confessors there are to intemperance and lust, or some other destructive vice. Inquire into the decays of noble and flourishing families, how goodly lordships and manors come so often to change their masters, and what makes riches such uncertain and mutable things. Look into the streets, and see what crowds of miserable and distressed people sloth and idleness and other vices have sent thither. What loud clamours should we have against the justice of the Divine providence did men suffer half so much by piety and virtue as they do in the service of their lusts?

If men's own vices be not a sufficient punishment to them, we may consider, in the next place, how bad men punish one another. There are infinite instances of this even in well-governed kingdoms ; where the vices of men are restrained by public laws and the severest executions of justice, yet how many outrages do they commit? rapes, murders, thefts, oppression, injustice, and all sorts of violence ! What work does pride and covetousness and lust make ! especially when such vices as these infect great men, and are armed with power to do mischief? Witness all the bloody wars of aspiring and ambitious princes, attended with the ruins and desolations of flourishing countries, and all the miseries and calamities which the most frightful fancy can conceive, and the most poetical wit describe.

But then, on the other hand, virtue has its natural rewards; it gives peace and satisfaction to the mind, governs our appetites and passions, that they cause no pain or disturbance to us: it is the best means to preserve our health, to increase our fortune, to procure friends, to reconcile enemies, to give us credit and reputation, to escape the injuries of bad men, to pass through the world with as little envy and opposition and jostling as it is possible; that is, it is not of itself sufficient to make a good man completely happy in this world, for there is no such thing to be had here, but it is the only thing that can make him as happy as he can be here: it will prevent a great many mischiefs which other men fall into, and enable him to bear those patiently which it cannot prevent.

This is the first step of God's governing mankind, that natural provision he has made for the punishment of wickedness, and the rewards of virtue. For I suppose all men will grant that this is God's own act; for none but he who made man could so fit and temper his nature to the laws of virtue, as to make his duty his natural reward and

happiness, and his sin his punishment. This is admirable and stupendous wisdom, and the most effectual means for the good government of the world, and which was necessary to make all other acts of government successful. But this is so useful an argument, that I cannot dismiss it without some farther remarks and observations.

1. God has, by this means, taken care that virtue shall never be wholly unrewarded, nor sin unpunished; for they are a reward and punishment to themselves: and such rewards and punishments as are founded in the nature of things are unavoidable.

2. This, in ordinary cases, supercedes the necessity of God's interposing by an immediate providence to reward good men, and punish the wicked. These natural rewards and punishments, when there is no occasion for more signal examples of God's goodness and justice, will serve for this world. For this reason, indeed, some men conclude that God takes no notice of human affairs, because he does not always visibly interpose for the punishment of wickedness, and the defence and protection of virtuous men. But God has made a standing provision for this in the nature of things, and that will serve the ordinary ends of Providence; and when he sees occasion for it, he can soon rectify any great disorders by a more immediate hand, which is most agreeable to the wisdom and to the majesty of Providence. Thus God governs the inanimate world, the heavens and the earth, and all the creatures in it, by keeping this great machine in that regular and uniform motion which he at first gave it, and suffering all creatures to follow the tendency of their own natures excepting such cases as require some extraordinary and preternatural events; as when God thinks fit to work miracles for the conviction of infidels, and to give authority to his prophets, or to punish a wicked world with drought, or famine, or pestilence, to infect the air, and to make the earth iron, and the heavens brass; the less the Divine providence deviates from the nature of things, while the world is well and wisely governed, the more admirable is his wisdom, who has so contrived the world that he can govern all creatures by the springs and principles of their own natures.

3. Thus these natural rewards and punishments give a sacred and venerable authority to the divine laws. For this proves that they are not arbitrary constitutions, which depend wholly upon the will and pleasure of God, who might, if he had pleased, have made virtue vice, and vice virtue, as some men venture to talk with equal ignorance, impudence, and profaneness; for unless God had made us other creatures than we now are, he could have given us no other laws, unless he could have given us laws destructive to our nature and happiness; for none but a virtuous man can be happy, and sin must make us miserable.

4. Nay, these natural rewards and punishments are a glorious justification of all the other acts of God's providence, for the rewarding good men and punishing the wicked: for this is to dispense rewards and punishments according to the nature and deserts of things, which becomes the just Governor of the world; for happiness is the natural effect and reward of virtue, and wickedness of vice; and therefore, to reward good men, and punish the wicked, is to reward men for making themselves happy, and to punish them for making themselves miserable; to encourage them to make themselves as good and happy as possibly they can, by rewarding them with new additions of happiness, and to restrain and terrify them from making themselves wicked and miserable by threatening and inflicting more severe punishments on them. And can there possibly be a more gracious government than this! What hath any man to quarrel at in it, unless it be that God is so greatly and passionately concerned that we should be happy? For this is the apparent intention and design of his providence in this world, both in rewarding good men, and punishing the wicked.

5. Nay, further, these natural rewards and punishments, which God has interwoven in the nature of things, whereby he has made virtue a reward and wickedness a punishment to itself, are not only a particular instance of God's providence in that natural provision he has made for the rewards of virtue, and the punishment of vice, but are a natural earnest and pledge of all other acts of Providence which are necessary to this end.

When God made virtue and vice the natural causes and instruments of our happiness and misery, it is certain that he intended that good men should be happy, and the wicked miserable: now, does God ever intend things by halves? will he not certainly effect what he intends? These natural rewards and punishments are one good way to do this: but suppose this fail in some instances, or cannot perfectly accomplish what God intended, will he give over here, and use no other more effectual methods to supply those defects? Notwithstanding all these natural rewards of virtue, good men, while they live intermixed with the wicked, may be oppressed by them, and made as miserable as all external calamities and sufferings can make them, and are in great danger of being so, unless a watchful Providence secure them. The practice and exercise of virtue will make men happy both in soul and body, where the natural effects of virtue are not hindered and interrupted by external violence: but where they are, a good man, though he cannot be called miserable, yet may be far enough from being happy; nay, would truly be miserable notwithstanding his virtue, had he not the assurance of the Divine protection at present, and of glorious rewards hereafter, which support his spirit, and make him happy in the

most afflicted fortune. The good government of our appetites and passions will make our minds cheerful and easy, contentment will sweeten a low fortune, and patience will make our sufferings light; but these would be impracticable virtues without a firm trust in God, and the expectation of future rewards: for to be greatly oppressed with present sufferings, without the support of greater hopes, will break the most virtuous mind, and make it sink and faint. Sobriety and temperance is the best method to preserve our healths, and prolong our lives, but yet good men may have very weak and distempered bodies, and may inherit the diseases of their parents, though not their vices; or what care soever they take to preserve their lives, yet they may be ravished from them. Frugality and diligence and charity, and such thriving virtues, may raise an estate, and oppression and injustice may take it away; and how glorious soever virtue be in itself, it may be eclipsed and darkened by envy or calumny, or reproached by a prevailing faction of triumphant sinners: and thus virtue may be deprived of all its natural rewards, if God does not interpose by his providence for its defence, or reserve some more certain rewards for it in the world to come. Thus sin, in its own nature, is very destructive, as you have heard, to the peace and pleasure of the mind, to the health of the body, to our estates and fortunes and reputation in the world: but yet some sinners may feel very little of this; a great and lasting prosperity will so qualify the natural malignity of sin as to make such men very unsensible of it; pride and ambition and covetousness have little trouble, but great pleasure in them when they are gratified with prosperous successes, with a daily increase of riches and honours. Envy and hatred and revenge are pleasing passions, when men have their enemies at their feet, and can trample on them at pleasure. Though intemperance and lust and prodigality may ruin an estate, fraud, injustice, and oppression, may get one; and as hurtful as some vices are to our health, a cautious sinner (and such there are in the world) may be very wicked without injuring his health, or shortening his life. And as infamous as sin is, this may be so concealed and palliated by external honours, that the sinner shall not feel it, nor bad men see it, nor good men dare take notice of it.

So that these natural rewards and punishments, which God has entailed on virtue and vice, may either wholly, or in a great measure, be defeated by the great external calamities of good men, and by the great prosperity of the wicked; and therefore, if it be God's will that good men shall be happy and the wicked miserable, as these natural rewards and punishments prove that it is, unless he will suffer himself to be defeated in the very end for which he made man, (which we can never suppose of so infinitely wise and powerful a Being), he must at

least in all such cases interpose by his Providence for the protection of good men, and the punishment of the wicked in this world, and reserve their final rewards and punishments for the world to come.

Had man preserved his innocence, and kept his original state in Paradise, virtue would then have been a reward unto itself, and have furnished us with all the internal principles of happiness, as Paradise did with all the external provisions and delights of nature: but since we are thrust into this world, where good men live among the bad, exposed to all the accidents of mortality and injuries of men, though these natural rewards and punishments are a great instrument of Providence still, yet it is necessary God should take good men into his more particular care in this world, and translate them into some more perfect state of happiness, since, as the world now is, it is impossible a divine virtue should receive its complete reward and recompense here. So that it seems as demonstrable to me that God governs this world at present, and will judge us in the next, as that he has made an essential difference between virtue and vice, and entailed natural rewards and punishments on them, which are of no use but for the government of the world; and as things now are cannot in many instances attain that end, without a Providence in this world, and a judgment in the next.

6. These natural rewards and punishments of virtue and vice are a natural proof and evidence of the future rewards and punishments of good and bad men, or a future judgment; and the reason of it is plain, because piety and virtue is a happy nature, and sin and vice a miserable nature; and therefore, at one time or other, virtue must make men happy, and vice miserable. Nature will act like itself, and produce its proper effects, unless it be hindered by some external force, and whenever that force is removed it will return to itself again.

Though the nature of piety and virtue be such as to make a reasonable creature happy, yet we know what it is that either abates, or, in a great measure, destroys the happiness of good men in this state; they live here in earthly bodies, which have strong sensual appetites and passions; and they feel all the pains and pleasures of the body, which makes many acts of virtue difficult and uneasy, in resisting the impressions of sense, and denying the gratification of the flesh. This world is the empire of sense, every thing in it courts and flatters our senses, and draws off our minds from the spiritual delights of virtue and religion, which are the proper and natural delights of a reasonable spirit, and, at best, extremely dull the spiritual sensation and relish of the soul, and make the delights of religion faint and languid, which must proportionably abate our spiritual pleasures.

These mortal bodies want a great many necessities and convenien-

cies of life, the care of which employs most of our thoughts and time; and though our secular affairs will furnish us with frequent opportunities of exercising great and excellent virtues, yet the world is apt to gain too much upon us, by our constant conversation with it; and as flesh and sense prevails, so the spirit loses: and if this does not defile the soul with worldly lusts, yet it takes off very much from the frequent and vigorous acts of a divine life, which is the true happiness of a reasonable soul.

But when these mortal bodies are exposed to great wants and sufferings, bad men are injurious, and meekness, and patience, and such tame and gentle virtues encourage their injuries; nay, true piety and religion itself may be the cause and reason of our sufferings; and when the body suffers, the soul suffers with it, and this stifles the present pleasures and satisfactions of virtue; and nothing can support the spirits of good men under such sufferings but the future expectations of great rewards. So that in this state, virtue alone is not a sufficient reward to itself; for either its pleasures are but faint and languid, or its sufferings overbalance its pleasures.

But yet, if we will but suppose a good man removed into such a state, where virtue and piety will have its free, unrestrained, undisturbed exercise, and can produce its natural effects without any hinderance and interruption, then it is demonstrable that piety and virtue must make men happy; and this secures the happiness of good men whenever they remove out of these bodies, and out of this world.

When these bodies and this world can no longer tempt or disturb us with its pains or pleasures; when the care and business of this world can no longer divert or employ our thoughts; when bad men can no longer injure us; when our souls are set at liberty to exercise all their rational powers; when we remove into a world of spirits, and converse only with spiritual objects, which will as strongly affect our minds as the things of this world do our senses; then virtue will and must be a reward unto itself; then the pleasures of wisdom, and knowledge, and divine passions, will be ravishing and transporting.

Thus, on the other hand, the nature of vice is such as to make a reasonable creature miserable; but yet a great prosperity in this world, and a confluence of all sensual enjoyments, may at present palliate and dissemble, or suspend these malignant influences of a vicious nature; they make men insensible of the want of true, rational, and divine pleasures, or of the pain and disturbance of sinful passions; may bind up our reason and conscience, and give such an empire and predominancy to sense, that we can neither understand nor relish any other pleasures but those of the body, and think ourselves completely happy while we have these. But if we will suppose such men stript of flesh and sense,

thrust out of these bodies, and out of this world, there is an end of their sensual happiness, and a sensualized soul is capable of no other: and when all other objects are removed, and such sinful and disordered minds are brought acquainted with themselves; when the virtue of these opiates is spent, and the soul recovers its sense again, then every vicious passion proves a fury; then guilt, and shame, and fear, and despair, and raging remorse, act their several tragedies in such a miserable soul. This is the true nature of sinful and disordered passions; and thus they must do when they act like themselves; and thus they will do when they are let loose upon us in the other world.

So that the natural rewards and punishments of virtue and vice, that virtue in its own nature is the life, the happiness, vice the death and misery, of a reasonable soul, do necessarily prove, that if good and bad men remove out of this world of sense into a world of spirits, piety and virtue must make men happy, and vice miserable; and we may take it for granted, that God will reward a happy and punish a miserable sinner.

7. These natural rewards and punishments of virtue and vice are a great instrument of Providence, as they are a most effectual antidote and remedy against superstition, which corrupts the manners of men, and debauches the world.

By superstition, I mean all those hypocritical arts of appeasing God, and procuring his favour, without obeying his laws, or reforming our sins. Infinite such superstitions have been invented by Heathens, by Jews, by Christians themselves, especially by the Church of Rome, which abounds with them. Now these superstitions do not only spoil all religion, but corrupt men's lives, and give them great security and impudence in sinning, which overturns the good government of the world: for while men persuade themselves that they may live as they list, and commit what villanies they please, and yet escape the wrath and vengeance, nay, obtain the favour of God, both in this world and in the next, it sets them free from all laws and government, and leaves no restraint on them, but what the laws of men, and the rods and axes of princes, lay on them.

But when men consider, that God has so contrived the nature of things, that virtue must make men happy, and vice miserable, they cannot imagine that God can be reconciled to wicked men, unless they think that he will alter the nature of virtue and vice for them. The rewards and punishments, the happiness and misery, of good and bad men are not now arbitrary things, at the disposal of God's arbitrary will and pleasure; but God must new-make man again, to make good men miserable, and bad men happy; they may as well expect ease in a fit of the gout or stone, or health in the paroxysms of a fever, as that a

wicked and corrupt nature should receive the rewards of religion and virtue.

This is the first evidence we have of a divine Providence, which governs the world; that divine justice which is interwoven in the nature of things, which has annexed such natural rewards and punishments to virtue and vice, and thereby marked them out for the proper objects of God's favour or vengeance.

II. Another evidence of God's providence and government is the institution of human governments for the punishment of wickedness, and the rewards of virtue. It is very plain in Scripture, that human power and authority is ordained by God. I need only direct you to *Rom. xiii.* for the proof of it; though indeed the nature of the thing proves itself, if we allow that God made the world; for he has made man such a creature, that human government is absolutely necessary; and to make human government necessary, is a natural institution of it. Man is a sociable creature, who cannot live alone, but must unite into societies; and the experience of mankind proves, that societies cannot be preserved without civil government to maintain the rights, and to restrain the violences and injuries of men; that if God had not by any direct and immediate institution set up any government, nor invested any particular persons with authority and power to govern others, yet men, if they would live together, which is necessary to the happiness of human life, must set up a government themselves by mutual consent, and intrust some persons with the administration of it. To be sure thus it is, there is no nation in the world without some kind of government; and God, who made the world, has made it necessary that it should be so; and whatever the nature of things makes necessary ought to be ascribed to the design and contrivance of the wise Maker of them. I have often despised the reasonings of a late atheistical philosopher, who has contributed so much to the debauching this age; who will by no means allow that there is any such thing as a law of nature; but what other men call laws of nature, he resolves into arbitrary compacts and agreements among men; and industriously proves how necessary it is for men to consent to such laws, if they would live happily together; as if there could be a plainer demonstration, or a better definition of a law of nature, than what the nature of things makes necessary to the happiness of mankind, and of human societies: for if this be not a law of nature, nothing is. And whatever laws and institutions necessarily result from the nature of things, must be owing to the Author of nature.

This is sufficient to the design of my present argument to prove that God does take care of the government of the world, in that he has instituted human government, which is so great an instrument of his pro-

vidence, which indeed our experience tells us lays greater restraints, in many cases, upon the lusts and passions of men than the hopes and fears of the other world do. Now, will any man say that God takes no care of the government of the world, when in all nations he has his officers and ministers to execute justice, and to maintain peace and order? We may as well say that a prince neglects the government of his kingdom, because he does not do every thing in his own person, but by his ministers. It becomes the wisdom and majesty of the Divine Providence to govern the world by human methods, and by the ministry of his creatures, as far as it can be so governed, and not to interpose by an immediate power but in urgent necessity, where human methods fail.

3. And this we have plain proofs of also, that God does interpose by a secret and invisible Providence, to supply the defects, or correct the miscarriages of public government, or to reward and punish men, and take care of his creatures, in such instances as fall not under the cognizance of human government.

I confess, it is no easy matter in ordinary cases to prove the interposal of the Divine Providence; because God brings great things to pass by natural causes, unseen accidents, or the ministry of men, while they seem to follow their own natures, and pursue their private interests, designs, and passions. For in all such events we know not what to attribute to God, and what to creatures, when God concurs with his creatures by a secret and invisible influence and power; which makes such men as are unwilling to believe a Providence to ascribe all to creatures, who are the visible actors in it. And therefore to satisfy you, that God does by a wise and just, though many times an invisible, power and influence over-rule all human affairs, consider with me:

1. That we have many examples of God's governing the world by an immediate and visible power; which proves that, at least, in such cases he does concern himself in human affairs, to reward good men, and to punish the wicked. If we will allow the books of Moses and Joshua to be a true history, we need no other proof of this. There we read that God destroyed the old world by a deluge of water, and preserved Noah and his family in the ark; that he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire from heaven, and sent his angels to fetch Lot out of it: there we read all the miracles God wrought in Egypt by the hand of Moses, for the punishment of the Egyptians, and the deliverance of Israel; how God overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea, which divided its waters. and gave a safe passage to the armies of Israel; by what a long series and succession of miracles God led Israel through the wilderness, punished their rebellion and wickedness, de-

stroyed their enemies, and gave them possession of the Promised Land; how he delivered them his laws from Mount Sinai, in an audible voice, and with a terrible appearance; placed his tabernacle among them, where he dwelt, and from whence he gave forth his oracles and responses, and governed Israel as visibly as a temporal prince governs his subjects.

This is an irresistible proof that God did govern the world in the days of Noah, when he destroyed the whole world for their wickedness; that in the days of Abraham and Lot he was not an idle spectator of the wickedness of men; that in the days of Moses he undertook the punishment of Egypt with his own hand, and governed Israel by an immediate power; and why then should we doubt whether God governs the world at other times, when he does not interpose by such an immediate and miraculous power? Is God less concerned in the government of the world now than he was in former days? is he less concerned to govern other nations, than he was to govern the Jews? is God the God of the Jews, and is he not the God of the Gentiles? The prophecy of Daniel concerning the rise, and growth, and decay, of the four monarchies, is a plain proof that the providence of God was not confined to Judea; or do we think that nothing is to be attributed to God but only some miraculous and supernatural effects? as if God could not govern his creatures without offering a perpetual violence to their natures, which would be a great blemish to his wisdom in making the world, if he cannot govern it without unmaking it again; for to alter the nature of things, is in part to unmake them; as if God could not steer and direct the course of Nature by an invisible hand; as if he could not influence the minds of men, and govern their thoughts, and counsels, and passions, without an audible voice from heaven. God never intended to govern the world by a constant series of miracles, for he can govern the world without them; and it is much better that he should, for it offers less violence to men's minds, and is a greater trial of their faith and virtue: but since bad men are so desirous to deliver themselves from the fears of an invisible power and justice, it was fitting that God should give the world some plain and undeniable testimonies of his providence and government, to convince them, that when he does not seem to take notice, he still presides over all human affairs, and does whatsoever pleaseth him both in heaven and earth.

Thus much I am sure is plain, that these visible demonstrations of God's government answer all the objections of atheists and infidels against Providence. If the Epicurean thinks that the government of the world, and the care of every particular creature in it, is too great a disturbance to the profound ease, and rest, and perfect happiness, of

his God, those undeniable examples of God's providence, particularly in the constant government of the Jewish nation, is a plain confutation of this : for the government of the whole world is no greater disturbance to an infinite Mind than the government of one nation is ; and yet God did not neglect the government of the Jews for fear of disturbing his ease and rest.

If you think the affairs of the world, and the government of creatures, below the care of an infinite Being, too inconsiderable for him to mind, how is this world more below his care than the old world was ? or how is the whole world more unworthy of his care than the Jewish nation was ? We may admire indeed the love, and goodness, and condescension of God, that he humbleth himself to behold the things both in heaven and in earth ; but though it is reason enough to admire his goodness, it is no reason to deny his providence.

If we object that great wickedness which has over-run the world, that violence, injustice, lewdness, which is committed in it ; this had been a much better argument against God's governing the old world, when all flesh had corrupted its ways, than it is now ; and yet they found God a righteous and terrible judge : so did Sodom and Gomorrah ; so did the inhabitants of Canaan, when the measure of their iniquity was full.

If we object the sufferings of good men, and the prosperity of the wicked, against Providence : thus it was in the Jewish nation, though God was manifestly their king and governor, as appears from the many complaints of David and Solomon, and the prophets, about this matter : and if good men may suffer, and the wicked prosper, in a nation which God does govern, this is no argument against God's providence and government of the whole world.

2. Since it is evident, from these miraculous providences, that God does at least sometimes interpose in the government of the world, and that this is a good argument that he governs the world at other times also when he does not work miracles ; I say, having laid this foundation, it is no hard matter to trace the plain footsteps of Providence in more ordinary occurrences ; for we may easily discover a divine wisdom and justice in many events, which have nothing miraculous in them. Whatever favours of deep counsel and design, and is of mighty consequence to the government of the world, and yet is brought to pass without any human foresight and contrivance, not only besides, but contrary to, the intentions and designs of the visible actors, ought to be attributed to an invisible Wisdom ; for Chance can no more govern the world wisely than it can make it.

When great and wonderful things are done by an unseen concurrence of many casual and fortuitous events ; when the greatest politicians are

outwitted, their counsels distracted, their measures broken, their designs defeated, without any visible wisdom or power to oppose them; when the hearts of princes are turned like the rivers of waters, and such an unaccountable change manifestly serves some great ends of Providence; when men of contrary interests and factions, without advising with each other, or reconciling their own quarrels, shall unexpectedly conspire in the same thing, and intend to serve their own contrary ends by it; I say, in such cases, whether it have the approbation of God or no, his hand is certainly in it.

When the punishments of bad men carry the marks and characters of their sins on them; when those who, in a drunken quarrel, have killed their friends or other neighbours, and escaped public justice, fall in the same manner in a drunken quarrel; when an unjust oppressor is ruined by unjust oppression; and those who have spoiled widows and orphans leave their own widows and orphans a rich prey to other spoilers: this made Adonibezek confess the righteousness of the Divine providence, when he had his thumbs and great toes cut off: "Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table; as I have done, so hath the Lord requited me," *Judges* i. 7.

When secret sins, especially barbarous murders, are discovered by some strange accident, and such sinners brought to punishment; when wicked and mischievous designs and conspiracies are defeated at the very instant of execution, as in the case of Haman and Mordecai, and the gunpowder treason; when men venture upon any wickedness to avoid a mischief which they foresee, and by that very means bring that mischief on themselves which they intended to prevent; these, and such like, are remarkable instances of a divine and unseen justice which governs the world.

And, not to insist too long on this; notwithstanding all the disorders and irregularities we complain of in this world; notwithstanding the many afflictions and sufferings of good men, and the great prosperity of the wicked; whoever considers things wisely, must confess it an argument of a wise Providence, that the world is kept in such good order as it is; that good men are no greater sufferers than they are, when there are so many wicked men to oppress them; but commonly make as good a shift here as bad men do; nay, excepting the case of persecution, and excepting some very few prosperous sinners, escape much better than wicked men do; that if we could adjust the account, and make fair allowances for that vast disproportion there is between the numbers of good and bad men, it would be found that good men, notwithstanding all the disadvantages they labour under, are much the most prosperous part of mankind.

When we consider how often the power of the world, and the administration of justice, is in corrupt and wicked hands, it is wonderful to see, that, as to the general concerns of mankind, justice is so equally administered, that human societies are not broken and dissolved by the furious lusts and passions of men.

It is wonderful to observe what an unseen and steady hand holds the balance of the world, and sets bounds to the ambition of princes, and keeps the most threatening torrents within their own banks; nay, when the world seems to be in confusion and inextricable disorders, past the redress of all human wisdom and counsel, restores peace and order again. Such events as these can be ascribed only to some unseen wisdom and power which governs the world.

2dly, Having shewn what evidence we have that God does govern the world at present; let us now consider the force of this consequence, that therefore God will judge the world hereafter. Now, this seems to me to be a self-evident consequence, that if God govern the world he will judge it; that is, reward every man according to his works: for the principal act of government is to judge; and it is impossible he should be a wise and just governor who does not judge.

The difference between the providence of God, or his present government of the world, and a final judgment, is no more but this; that they have different ends, and therefore must have different rules and measures, but they are both God's judging the world; and therefore, if God begins his judgment of mankind in this world, there is no reason to doubt but he will finish and perfect his judgment in the next: if he judges mankind now as far as is proper to the state of this world, it is a sufficient reason to believe that in the next world he will exercise such acts of judgment as are proper for that state.

The great ends of Providence in this world are the preservation of human societies, the encouragement of piety and virtue, and the discouragement of vice; to keep men under discipline, to lay restraints upon their lusts and passions, to wean them from the love of this world, to exercise their graces, their faith, and patience, and charity; and, by the different methods of kindness and severity, (as his own wisdom judges best and fittest), to reclaim the wicked and the wandering prodigals, and to advance good men to greater degrees and perfections of goodness. The end of God's judging mankind in the next world is to allot men such rewards and punishments as are proportioned to their works and deserts; to bestow eternal life on good men, and to execute the threatening of eternal death upon bad men, which is the final conclusion and consummation of judgment: and if God judges all men in this world, as far as is necessary for this world, it is reasonable to think that he will perfect his judgment in the world to come.

Now, it is plain he does the first, as will appear from particulars : he corrects the miscarriages of public government, public injustice and oppression, a public contempt of God and of religion, and of all things sacred, a general corruption of manners, and an inundation of wickedness. Such nations seldom escape long without a severe scourge, unless God makes use of them to scourge other nations as wicked as themselves. But a righteous and religious nation, which preserves justice among men, and the knowledge, and reverence, and worship of God, is the darling and favourite of Providence, and is blessed with all prosperous successes both at home and abroad. So the wise man tells us, "That righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is the reproach of any people." Thus it is apt to do of itself, but the Divine Justice and Providence takes care that it shall do so: for though every particular good man is not rewarded, nor every particular bad man punished, in this world, yet God governs kingdoms and nations by a more equal and steady justice. For, indeed, public societies are the principal objects of his rewards and punishments in this world; because the good government of mankind depends so much upon it. The virtues or vices of private men have but a narrow influence, and can do but little good or hurt; but public government is a public good or mischief, and the disorders of it are like an eclipse of the sun, which brings darkness upon the world; and therefore, such a very wicked nation is seldom long unpunished, or a righteous nation oppressed. And this is a visible exercise of God's judgment in this world, in rewarding or punishing kingdoms and nations, which are the great wheels of Providence, whereon the regular motion and good government of the world depends; as I observed to you before, that God governs the world by erecting human governments, and therefore is more especially concerned to govern them.

Thus, in order to discourage wickedness, and to encourage true piety and virtue, which is another end of Providence, it is not necessary that God should reward every good man, or punish every bad man, in this world; some few great examples of such rewards and punishments are sufficient to this purpose, especially if they are so many and so frequent, that no bad man can promise himself impunity even in this life, nor any good man have reason to despond or distrust Providence. And as many complaints as there are of the prosperity of bad men, and the sufferings of the good, yet every age and every country, nay, almost every village, will furnish us with so many examples of miserable sinners, and of the visible rewards of virtue, as are abundantly enough to make all considering men reverence the Divine Justice and Providence; and therefore God exercises as great, as frequent, as visible, acts of judgment as the state of this world requires.

Especially when we consider, that this world is a state of discipline, a school of virtue, where we must learn to govern our passions and appetites, to conquer vicious habits, and to live above the body and pleasures of it; to forgive injuries, to love enemies, to suffer patiently, to be contented with a little, to trust Providence, to live by faith and hope of unseen things. Now, such a state as this will not admit of an exact distribution of rewards and punishments. Bad men must not always be punished for their sins, because sometimes external prosperity and a sense of the divine goodness may work more kindly on them; or if they be punished, their punishments must be rather corrections than acts of justice; that is, they must not always bear proportion to their deserts, but to their cure; as a father corrects his child, not so much to punish his fault as to reform it. And for the same reason good men must not always be prosperous, for they may need adversity to exercise, increase, and brighten their virtues, and to make them greater examples to the world; or if God sees fit to reward them, it must be in such instances and such proportions as they can bear; not always what they may deserve, but what will be for their good.

Thus God governs the world with great justice and judgment, as far as the state of this world requires and admits; and what reason then is there to question whether God will judge mankind in the world to come?

His exercise of justice and judgment in this world proves that he is the Judge of the world, not an idle and unconcerned spectator of human actions; that he interests himself in the affairs of mankind, is solicitous to make all his creatures happy, is an enemy to wickedness and to wicked men; but the friend, protector, and father of good men. And if God be the Judge of the world, why should we think that he will not judge it? nay, if he actually execute justice and judgment in this world, why should we think that he has reserved no acts of judgment for the next world, which is a more proper place for it, and requires some different acts of judgment peculiar to that state? If God reward good men, and punish wicked men, in this world, why should we think that he has reserved no rewards or punishments for them in the next? especially if we consider these two things:

I. That it is very evident that the judgment of God in this world is not final; that is, that the blessings God bestows upon good men in this world are not the only rewards he intends for them, nor the present evils and calamities he brings upon bad men their only punishments. This is very plain and express in Scripture; but I must not appeal to Scripture now, while I am arguing from reason, and therefore must consider what natural indications we have of this: As,

1. That good and bad men live together, intermixed in this world,

in the same country, the same neighbourhood, nay, the same family, and therefore God does not intend finally to reward good men, or punish the wicked here, for that requires a separation of them; the same place will not admit of perfect happiness and perfect misery, which must be the effect of a final judgment; for their very neighbourhood will necessarily allay each other.

Unless God should make good men other creatures than they now are, it would be impossible for them to see the perpetual executions, and the amazing miseries of sinners, without disturbing their own ease and rest; and then they could not be perfectly happy in this world. As things now are, the many miseries and calamities of human life exercise the pity and compassion of good men, and afflict them with a tender and painful sense of other men's sufferings; and what would it then do, were all wicked men punished in this world according to their deserts? which would make this world the very image and picture of hell? a very unfit place for good men to be happy in. And if good men were all perfectly rewarded in this world, bad men, who live and converse among them, could not be perfectly miserable: for to live in a happy place, and among happy people, is some allay of misery; at least, it is not like being condemned to eternal night and darkness, to the company of devils and damned spirits.

Besides this, without a miraculous Providence, good men cannot live among the wicked but they must suffer from them, nor bad men live among the good but they must receive good from them; and therefore neither of them can be perfectly happy or perfectly miserable while they live together.

Were there no more in it but this, the very wickedness of men, their lewdness, injustice, oppression, profaneness, contempt of God and religion, would be a perpetual trouble and vexation to the good; as the soul of righteous Lot was grieved with the filthy conversation of the wicked; and this makes a great abatement in their happiness. And it would not be a less miracle, to preserve all good men from the injuries of the wicked who live among them, especially when they are the prevailing numbers, and have great power to do mischief, than it was to preserve Daniel in the lions' den from being devoured by those hungry and ravenous beasts.

Nay, it is impossible that God should punish all wicked men in this world without involving some good men in their calamities and sufferings. When God punishes a wicked nation with plague, or famine, or sword; when he fires a city, and reduces all the buildings of it to a heap of rubbish; how is it possible but that good and bad men, who live together, must suffer in such a common calamity? There is reason enough why God should now sometimes permit this; because

even good men may deserve such corrections; and he can easily recompense them other ways; but this would be no reason, if good men were to receive their final reward in this world; for then they ought to be exempted from the punishments of the wicked.

Thus how impossible is it for God to punish all bad men here, without punishing good men in them? Have not many good men very wicked relations, for whom they have a very tender affection; parents, or brethren, or children, or those who are nearer to them than all these? And can they be contented to be witnesses of their sufferings? This cannot be, unless good men in such cases could divest themselves of natural affections, which we see is not, and cannot be done; and if it could, would be a greater mischief to the world than the sufferings of bad men would do good to it.

And, for the same reason, bad men cannot be perfectly miserable in this world while good men live among them: for unless God should forbid the exercise of some of the most excellent virtues of the Christian life, and which are in themselves most beneficial to the world, good men will exercise great charity and goodness, forgiveness and patience, towards the wicked, will relieve their wants, and pity their sufferings, and be their patrons and advocates both with God and men; that is, will do good to them, and procure blessings for them.

The intercessions of good men very often divert judgments, and obtain great blessings for a very wicked nation. Sodom itself had escaped upon the intercession of Abraham, had there been ten righteous persons found in it: and God very often spares a wicked nation for the sake of good men who live among them, and must suffer by such public judgments; that is, he spares bad men to save the righteous. Thus, God bestows many temporal blessings upon the friends, relations, and posterity, of good men, though they are wicked; and this is part of the reward of piety and virtue in this world; and therefore all good men cannot be rewarded, and all wicked men punished, in this world; because many good men must be punished in the punishment of the wicked, and many wicked men must escape, nay, must prosper in the world, as a reward of the good: which is not considered by those who make the impunity and prosperity of some bad men an argument against Providence; when the very prosperity of these bad men is many times the reward of virtue, and a designed favour and indulgence to the good: but what I have now said plainly proves that God's judgment in this world is not final, because good and bad men live together; and it is absolutely necessary that they should be parted when God comes to render to every man according to his works; as our Saviour declares that they shall be at the final judgment, when the sheep shall be placed on his right hand, and the goats on the left.

2. That God's judgment in this world is not final, appears from this, that all good men are not rewarded, nor all wicked men punished, in this world, as they ought to be, if God did not intend to judge men in the next world for what they have done in this.

That this is so, I need not prove; because we every day see it: and this is made a great objection against Providence, that many bad men are prosperous, and many good men afflicted. And a foolish objection it is against Providence, but a very good argument for a future judgment.

When we have so many arguments to prove that God does govern the world; that he does even in this life reward good men, and punish the wicked, as much as is necessary for the good government of the world; it is very absurd to confute all this, only by saying, that he does not govern the world as we think he ought to govern it; that is, that he does not punish every bad man, nor reward every good man, in this life. Whoever would make good this argument, must prove, that there is no other world after this wherein God can reward those good men, and punish those wicked men, whom he has not sufficiently rewarded or punished in this life; or he must prove that it is absolutely necessary to the ends of government to reward every good man, and to punish every wicked man, in this world, and not to defer their final rewards and punishments to the next: for if it be granted that there is another world after this; and that God, if he sees fit, may defer the final rewards and punishments of good and bad men to the next world; then this is no objection at all against Providence.

But then, instead of being an objection against Providence, it becomes a very strong argument for a future judgment: for if God does govern and judge the world, and yet justice is not equally and impartially administered to all men, but some good men are greatly afflicted, and some wicked men are greatly prosperous; it is little less than a demonstration, that there is some other judgment to come, besides what God exercises in this world. For it is certain, if God judge the world at all, he will judge it righteously, and will render to every man according to his works; for justice and righteousness is essential to the notion of a God: and therefore, since we see this is not always done in this world, we must conclude that God's judgment of mankind does not end with this world, but extends to a future state; that is, that there is a judgment to come after this life, when we shall be rewarded according to our works.

3. That the judgment of God in this world is not final, appears from this, that the rewards and punishments of this life cannot be the final and proper rewards and punishments of good and bad men. External prosperity, and external miseries and sufferings, are the only

rewards and punishments we are capable of in this life; and therefore, when God would visibly express his kindness and favour to good men, he makes them prosperous; and when he would express his anger and displeasure against the wicked, he punishes them with some temporal evils: and this is all that can be done in this world, except the peace and satisfaction, or the guilty remorse, of our own consciences, which God can heighten as he sees fit. But now it is certain, that external prosperity is not the proper and peculiar reward of virtue, nor external sufferings the peculiar punishment of sin; for if they were, a just and righteous judge could never permit bad men to be prosperous, nor good men to be afflicted, if prosperity were due only to virtue, and afflictions and sufferings to vice. The promiscuous distribution of the good and evil things of this world, both to good and bad men, proves that prosperity is not always good, nor adversity always evil; that prosperity is rather a present encouragement than the proper reward of virtue; and external calamities rather a curb and restraint than the proper punishment of vice: and therefore, when God can serve the ends of his providence by it, he may make bad men prosperous, and afflict the good; for this is not to transfer the necessary and peculiar rewards of virtue upon bad men, nor to inflict the peculiar punishments of sin upon good men, which cannot be done by a just and righteous judge. Now, if the happiness and miseries of this life be not the proper and peculiar and inseparable rewards and punishments of virtue and vice, then there are some other rewards and punishments reserved for good and bad men in the next world, such rewards as no bad men shall share in, and such punishments as shall not be inflicted on any good man; that is, besides the providence and judgment of God in this world, God will judge good and bad men in the next, and render to every man according to his works.

II. The nature of the Divine providence and government, and the manner and circumstances of its administration in this world, are a plain indication of a future judgment.

The visible design of Providence is not to reward all good men, and punish the wicked, in this world; for this is not done but to curb and restrain wickedness, and to encourage piety and virtue: and therefore God gives us such examples of his justice as are sufficient to over-awe mankind, and make them fear his power and vengeance, and such examples of his favour, kindness, and regard to good men, as may encourage them to be good and virtuous, with the expectations of great rewards: but what does all this signify, unless it proves that God will punish bad men, and reward the good? And if it proves this, it must prove that God will do it in the next world; for it is plain that he does not do it here. And therefore, if we will allow that God go-

verns the world wisely, we must confess that the examples of God's goodness and justice in this world prove a future judgment; for they are not so universal as to answer the ends of justice in rewarding good men, and punishing the wicked, in this world. And unless they prove a future judgment, they are not sufficient either to over-awe and restrain bad men, or to encourage the good: for though the frequent examples of God's justice and severity against sin destroys men's security in sinning, (for no bad man can be sure that God will not punish him, as he does a great many other bad men); yet we daily see they would venture this, did not the present execution of justice threaten them with the more terrible judgment of the next world.

Thus, if we consider the providence of God as a method of discipline, whereby he conquers men's love to sin, and breaks the habit of vice, or exercises and improves their virtues, this is a very unaccountable thing without a future judgment. Why should God exercise so much patience towards wicked men, and bear so long with them, to conquer them by methods of kindness, were it not in great goodness to give them time for repentance, that they may escape eternal miseries?

Why should God exercise men with such long and repeated severities, to conquer their love to this world, to teach them to govern their appetites and passions, and to make them good men, if there be no reward for virtue and piety in the next world?

Why should he afflict good men all their lives, whose virtue deserves a more prosperous fortune, only to exercise their faith and patience, and to advance them still to more divine perfections, unless he intended to reward their present sufferings, and their eminent virtue, with a brighter and more glorious crown?

There are many passages of Providence which there can no other account be given of, but that they are methods of discipline, to conquer men's love to sin, or to improve their graces and virtues: and I am sure there can be no account given of this why God should, with so much patience and forbearance expect the repentance of some sinners, and exercise good men with so much severity to make them better, unless the providence of God in this world have a principal regard to the rewards and punishments of the next; that is, unless there be a judgment to come, to reward good men, and to punish the wicked. This, I hope, is sufficient to make good this consequence, that if God govern the world at present, he will judge it hereafter,

S E C T. IV.

The natural presages of conscience prove a future Judgment; and if there be a future state, there must be a future Judgment.

V. **T**HE natural presages of conscience are another good argument of a future judgment; that is, that all men naturally expect to be judged, to be rewarded or punished for the good or evil they do; and this is a strong natural presumption that God will judge the world. This is an argument of great moment, and therefore deserves to be particularly explained: To which purpose I shall, 1. show you that it is so. 2. That this is not an artificial impression, but the natural sense of our own minds. And, 3. That this does prove that God will judge the world, and render to every man according to his works.

I. That it is so, that all men have a natural presage of judgment. There is indeed a very formidable objection against this, that very few men live as if they did expect to be judged. But this is as good an argument against men's belief of the gospel of Christ, and the express revelation of a future judgment, as it is against the natural sense and presages of conscience; for there are too many who profess to believe the gospel, but do not live as if they did believe a judgment. But I need not trouble myself about this, because it is an objection only to Atheists and infidels, if indeed it be an objection to them: other bad men, who live as if they did not believe a judgment, yet feel in themselves that they do believe it, and when they think of it they believe and tremble too, as the devils do; though at other times they are overpowered by the world and the flesh to act contrary to the convictions of conscience, and the fears of judgment.

The Heathens themselves, who had only the light of Nature to direct them, were very sensible of the private judgment of their own consciences, which did either accuse them when they did ill, and fill them with remorse and fear of vengeance; or excuse, commend, and applaud them when they did well, and gave them great and cheerful hopes of a reward; as St. Paul tells us, *Rom. xiv. 15.* and is frequently observed by the Heathen philosophers, poets, orators, and historians, as a thing universally acknowledged: and indeed I know no man at this day who denies it, and therefore I need not prove it. All men feel this in themselves, even Atheists and infidels, whenever they are serious and thoughtful, when the judgments of God overtake them, or they see the near approaches of death and another world. The greatest power cannot defend men from these fears; princes and politicians are equally exposed to them with meaner subjects: those whom no human power can touch are over-awed by an invisible justice.

II. Since this is universally acknowledged, the only question is, To what cause to attribute these fears and rebukes of conscience? The Atheists will by no means allow these fears to be natural, but only the effects of a superstitious education, as they say the belief of a God, and the differences of good and evil are. Men have been taught from their infancy that there is an invisible Power that governs the world, which would reward good men, and punish the wicked, and have been frightened with the fairy stories of infernal judges, and Styx and Acheron, or hell-fire; and this made such an impression upon their tender fancies as can never be wore out, at least not without great industry and resolution of mind; and this, they say, makes weak men conclude that they are natural. But this is a very absurd and ridiculous account of the matter, as will appear, if you consider by what rules we are to judge what is natural and what not. For if these presages of conscience have all the marks and signs of being natural, that we can have that any thing is natural, we must either say that nothing is natural, or that we cannot tell what is natural and what not, or we must confess it great perverseness of mind to deny that to be natural which has all the signs and marks of being natural that any thing can have.

Now, *1st*, That is natural which is universal or common to the whole kind, for we have no other way of knowing what the natures of things are but by observing what is common to all creatures of the same kind and species; for nothing is common to all individuals but a common nature: and if what is universal and common to all mankind is natural, these censures and rebukes of conscience are natural, for they are common to all men: for though we should grant that some few Atheists have wholly conquered these fears, and never feel the lashes and rebukes of their own consciences, such few and rare examples ought to be looked on as the corruption of human nature, not as the measure and standard of it; for it is no news to say that human nature may be corrupted, that the very essential principles of it may be depraved; and in such cases we always judge, and that with very good reason, that what is most common and universal is natural, not what is as rare and as ominous as a monstrous birth.

2^{dly}, Especially when we consider that that is most natural which is born and bred with us, and is the original state of human nature: for nature is before art; and before the voluntary corruptions and degeneracy of nature. This Atheists see and confess, and therefore attribute the belief of a God, and the checks of conscience, and the fears of judgment, to education; that these principles were instilled into us from the beginning, and grow up with us into confirmed and settled prejudices; and I readily grant that education has a great stroke in forming our notions, and in awakening and cultivating our natural

reason; for though we are born with a power and faculty of reason, and our minds are so framed as to understand and assent to such truths when they are proposed to us, to know and acknowledge prime and original principles at first view, as the eye discerns light and distinguishes colours, yet we are not born with the exercise of reason, but it must be put into act, and formed by education: but this I say, that it is an argument how natural these notions are to our minds, that they are the first principles all mankind assent to without difficulty or dispute; and such principles as when men grow up they find lie even and easy in their minds: they are the first things which Atheists themselves do naturally believe; and that they do not believe them now is the effect of great industry and violence. It is a piece of art to be an Athiest, which they are a great while learning, which very few men, though well disposed to it, can ever learn; but to believe a God, and to fear and reverence his invisible power and justice, is not art but nature, and therefore common to all mankind, and the first thing they learn to believe.

3dly, Another mark of what is natural is, that it is absolutely inseparable from nature, or at least not without extreme difficulty and violence; and this proves the hopes and fears of good and bad men to be very natural: for how impossible it is to conquer these fears, I appeal to your own sense and experience. As many bad men as there are, who would be very glad to get rid of these fears, and to laugh them out of the world, there are but very few that can do it. Some men indeed stifle their consciences, and lay them asleep by the various arts of superstition, whereby they hope to appease God, and to keep their sins still; or by the deceitful vows and promises of repenting before they die, or by perpetual business and entertainments, which employ their thoughts, and keep off all melancholy reflections; or by such perpetual debaucheries as stupify their minds and make them insensible: now, these men's fears are silenced for a while, but not conquered; whatever makes them reflect upon themselves, and consider their own state, awakens their fears again, and makes them more outrageous and tormenting than ever. The Atheist is certainly so far in the right, that there is no way to get rid of these fears but by banishing the belief of a God and of another world out of their minds: but few men can do this; and Athiests themselves, when they have impudently enough derided the superstition of the rest of the world, and think they can answer all the arguments for the being of a God, and a future state, yet cannot wholly deliver their minds from these fears; they ever and anon recur upon them, and, after all their pretended assurance and confidence, they are very jealous what may be; and many times some cross accidents and events, or the approach of death, opens their eyes,

and makes them acknowledge a God, and tremble at the thoughts of judgment, which they had so long despised.

This is a certain proof that those fears are not owing to education, but spring from nature; for the mistakes of education may be rectified by reason and experience, especially when they are such troublesome mistakes that mankind are desirous to get rid of them. No such mistakes could ever hold out long against reason and interest; whatever is a mistake may be confuted by reason, and when it is men's interest to discover the mistake, this will make them very sagacious in their inquiries, and very ready to see their mistake; that had the fears of bad men been the effect only of idle tales and traditionary fables, it is impossible they should have withstood all the wit and reason of philosophical Atheists; that such men with all their arguments should not be able to make themselves absolutely secure, much less to make many converts; though every age and nation has been filled with men whose lives have disposed them to be Atheists. These are the general marks and signs of what is natural; that which is universal and common to all mankind; that which is the first and original sense of human nature; and that which is so deeply fixed in our minds, that no art or industry can wholly root it out: and all this proves, that these presages of conscience, the hopes good men have of a reward, and the fear of punishment and vengeance which haunts bad men, are the natural sense of men's minds.

III. Let us now consider the force of this argument, how these hopes and fears of good and bad men are natural presages of a future judgment.

1. Now, in the first place, I think I may lay it down as a certain principle, that nature, or the natural sense of our own minds, does not deceive us; for if we should say it may, there is an end of all certainty; we must be sceptics in every thing, if we cannot believe the natural impressions upon our minds; for I know not then why we should believe our external senses, what we see, or hear, or feel. If man was made by God, who is eternal truth, the natural sense of our minds must be as true and certain as our bodily senses are: for though the deductions of reason are not always so necessary and certain, because men may reason wrong; yet if the first principles of reason, and the immediate sense of our minds, which are common to human nature, should misguide us, this were the fault not of reasoning and discourse, but of nature itself, and therefore must be charged upon the Author of nature; and certainly there cannot be so ill a contrived creature made as man is, who is pursued with the fears of justice and vengeance when he does ill, and flattered with the promising hopes of great re-

wards when he does well, if there be no future judgment to reward good men, and to punish the wicked.

2. For, secondly, These natural hopes and fears of good and bad men immediately respect the judgment of God, not of men, and concern the rewards and punishments of the other world more than of this. Let bad men be never so powerful and prosperous, though they fear no hurt from men, nor any change and alteration of their fortune, yet the sense of guilt distracts and terrifies them with the fears of an unseen and almighty vengeance; and though good men suffer very hard things from the world, and have no prospect of better usage here, yet their consciences speak peace to them, and support them with great hopes; and therefore, unless these natural hopes and fears deceive us, good men shall certainly be rewarded by God, and bad men punished, either in this world, or in the next, or in both.

3. We may consider farther, that these hopes and fears of good and bad men give a natural confirmation to all those other arguments which I have already urged for the proof of a future judgment. As, to show this in a few words:

1. This proves a natural sense in all men that they are accountable creatures, and shall be called to an account for their actions; for unless men were sensible of this, why should their consciences acquit or condemn them? why should they judge themselves but in relation to some higher tribunal, which will certainly judge them? especially when the consciences of bad men do not only condemn but threaten them; and the consciences of good men do not only acquit or absolve, but promise a reward; for they can neither punish nor reward themselves.

2. This proves the natural sense we have of the essential difference between good and evil, and that what is good deserves a reward, and what is evil deserves punishment; because good men expect a reward for the good they do, and bad men fear punishment when they have done evil; which shows a natural sense of the just merits and deserts of both good and evil, and that they shall receive their just rewards.

3. This proves also that natural sense mankind have that God is the supreme and sovereign Lord and Judge of the world, and will judge mankind; for there is no other tribunal which all mankind can be accountable to. The common sense of human nature must respect the universal Lord and Judge of the world, who has a natural right to govern and to judge mankind. He who made us imprinted this sense upon our minds; for what is natural is owing only to the Author of nature; and therefore these natural hopes and fears can only relate to the government and judgment of our Maker and natural Lord;

and then they must prove that God will judge us, that he will reward and punish us according to our works. Nay,

4. This proves that natural sense men have of a just Providence which governs this world at present; for though these natural hopes and fears do not give men any assurance that they shall be rewarded or punished in this world as they deserve, yet a good conscience, especially some great and eminent virtues, give good men great hopes in God, and a secure trust and dependence on his Providence, even in this life; and a great sense of guilt makes men afraid of present vengeance. Though God may think fit to delay the punishment of bad men till the next world, yet a guilty conscience never thinks itself safe here. So that if there be any force in these arguments, the accountableness of human nature, the essential differences of good and evil, the natural notions of God's dominion and sovereignty, and that just Providence which governs the world at present to prove a future judgment, they all receive strength and confirmation from the natural hopes and fears of good and bad men, which are a natural presage of judgment. And this is a fifth argument of a future state, the natural prelatges of conscience.

6. To add no more; the removing mankind out of this world into the next proves the necessity of a future judgment. If mankind, after death, subsist in another state, they must be judged, and therefore judgment is as certain as a life after death, which I must take for granted in this argument; the reason I believe of this is not obvious at the first proposal, but it will be plain, if you consider but some few things:

1. That when we go into the next world, we must remove into a state of happiness or misery: I do not mean, that when we go into the next world, good men shall be certainly happy, and the wicked miserable; for that is to beg the thing in question, and to take that for granted which is to be proved. But if we live in the next world, it is certain we must be happy or miserable there; for every thing that lives is so, in proportion to the capacities of its nature.

2. That our state and condition in the next world must have relation to our behaviour and deserts in this. When God first makes man, he puts him into such a state as is fitted to his nature; for when he has done neither good nor evil, it is not what he deserves, but what God sees him fit for, that must allot him his rank and station; but when man is removed out of one state of life into another, his behaviour in the first state must be taken into consideration when God allots him a second: for though his state of life is changed, the person is the same, and his deserts are the same; and if he deserved ill in this world he cannot deserve well in the next; and if he deserved well in this world, he ought to be well used in the next.

Some philosophers, who believed that the souls of men did pre-exist in a former state before they came into these bodies, thought this a very good account of the different fortunes of men's birth, education, condition, and circumstances of life, that they were proportioned to their merits and deserts in that former state. And were this true, that the souls of men did live in a former state before they came into these bodies, this might be a very fair and reasonable account of it: for when men have deserved well or ill, whether they are continued in the same state, or translated into some other, the justice of the divine Providence in allotting their state and condition of life must have respect to their former deserts; before creatures have deserved well or ill, their condition must be allotted by the divine Wisdom and Goodness, with respect to the capacities of their natures; when they have deserved well or ill, their condition must be allotted by Justice with respect to their deserts: this is so plain, that it will admit of no dispute.

III. And then it necessarily follows, that God must judge mankind in the next world, must reward or punish men according to their works; that is, must put them into such a state of happiness or misery as they have deserved, and have made themselves fit for: those who have obeyed God, and purified and refined their natures by the habits of grace and virtue, are fit objects of his goodness, and have made themselves capable of a divine happiness, of seeing God, and dwelling in his presence; but those who have debased their natures with the love of this world, and have defiled their souls with impure lusts, deserve to be banished from God's presence, as rebels and apostate creatures; and having made themselves incapable of divine joys, must suffer the miseries of damned spirits. So that, if we will but allow that God allots men their condition in the next world as he does in this, and that in allotting their condition in the next world, he has any regard to their behaviour and deserts in this, as wisdom and justice requires he should, this proves a future judgment, and that God will reward or punish men according to their works. And this may suffice for the first thing proposed, what natural evidence we have of a judgment to come.

SECT. V.

The Scripture proofs of a future Judgment.

II. **H**AVING shown what evidence we have from the light of Nature for a future judgment, let us now consider the Scripture proofs of it: and this might be dispatched in a very few words, by turning you to some plain texts of Scripture which expressly assert it;

but I shall do something more than this, which, if it be not necessary for the proof of a future judgment, yet will be of use for the better understanding the Christian religion, and to rivet this belief faster in our minds; that is, I shall represent to you those parabolical reasonings, whereby our Saviour insinuates this belief into our minds; and shew you, that the whole Christian religion is founded on and adapted to the belief of a future judgment, and is a very unintelligible institution without it.

1. Let us consider those plain and express proofs the gospel of our Saviour contains of a future judgement; and some few texts will be sufficient for this purpose. This is expressly affirmed by St Paul, *Acts. xvii. 31* "That God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness." The Apostle to the Hebrews tells us, "It is appointed for men once to die, and after that the judgment," *Heb. vi. 27*. Our Saviour tells us, that we shall be judged; *Matth. vii. 1, 2*. "Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you again." And *ver. 22, 23*. he tells us, that "in that day," (that is, the day of judgment) "many will say unto me, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Thus he tells us, *Matth. xvi. 27*, "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." And *Matth. xxv. 31, &c.* he gives a lively description of the future judgment. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left." And then he judges them, and pronounces their final doom and sentence according to their works, as it follows in that place. It were easy to turn you to many texts to this purpose, as every one knows who is acquainted with the Scripture; but there is no need of it; these few are so express, that, if we believe the gospel, we must believe that we shall be judged.

2. Our Saviour does not only expressly declare this, that there shall be a judgment, but insinuates the belief and reasonableness of this by some proper allusions and comparisons; which is the true scope and design of many parables.

As to instance in some of them; *Luke xix. 12, &c.* he tells of "a certain nobleman, who went into a far country, to receive for him-

“ self a kingdom, and to return ;” where he describes his own leaving this world, and ascending into heaven to take possession of his kingdom ; from whence he shall return again at the last day to judge the world. This nobleman “ called his servants, and delivered them ten pounds, “ and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, “ and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to “ reign over us.” This describes our state in this world, which is a state of labour and industry, where we must improve our Master’s money, all the advantages and opportunities of doing good, to his service and glory. Now, as it is reasonable to expect, when such a King returns, that he will call his servants to an account, reward the diligent, and punish the slothful, and destroy his enemies, the same usage we must expect from our Lord, when he returns again ; he will judge us, will reward or punish us according to our works. To the same purpose is that parable, *Matth* xxv. 14, &c. of a man travelling into a far country, who called his servants, and delivered to them his goods ; and, at his return, rewarded them proportionably to the increase and improvement they had made, and punished that wicked servant who hid his talent in a napkin. The parable of the unjust steward, who had wasted his master’s goods, and was turned out of his stewardship for it, is founded on the same reason, that we are but stewards of God’s gifts in this world, and that God will as certainly call us to an account for our stewardship as an earthly master will, *Luke* xvi. 1. The parable of the householder, who hired labourers into his vineyard, and gave them every man his penny at night, *Matth*. xx. signifies to us, that in this life we must work in God’s vineyard, and finish the work he has given us to do, and that at evening, when this life ends, God will reward us in the next : and this we may as certainly and reasonably expect from God as an hired labourer expects his wages when he has done his work.

The parable of the King, *Mat*. xxii. who made a marriage for his Son, and sent forth his servants to call them who were bidden to the wedding, but they refused to come ; and evil-entreated his servants, and slew them ; upon which the King was wroth, and sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city, and sent and invited others to the marriage ; though it primarily refer to the destruction of the Jewish nation for their rejecting their Messiah, and calling the Gentiles into the church, yet is founded on the same reason, that God will punish our abuse of his grace, and all the invitations of the gospel, as a gracious but affronted prince would punish his subjects in such a case.

But the parable of the wheat and tares, *Mat*. xiii. 24, &c. is very observable, because it gives an account why God does not destroy all

bad men in this world, and yet that he will punish the wicked and reward the good in the next world. "A man soweth good seed in the field, and while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares; but when the blade sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also." This our Saviour expounds, *ver.* 37, &c. "He that soweth good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom," that is, good Christians, "but the tares are the children of the wicked one," that is, bad men. "The enemy that sowed them is the devil," as our Saviour tells such men, "Ye are of your father the devil, and his works ye do." The servants of the householder, having informed their master of what had happened, ask him, Whether they should go and gather up the tares? "But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let them both grow together till the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them into bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." Which he thus expounds: "The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels;" for so our Saviour tells us he must come "in the glory of the Father, with his angels," who are the ministers and executioners of his justice. "As therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father." This, we must confess, was wisely considered by the householder, not to destroy the wheat with the tares, but rather suffer them both to grow up together till the harvest, than to pluck up the wheat before it be ripe, together with the tares.

And this is a good reason why God does not destroy all bad men in this world, because good and bad men are intermixed, and all bad men cannot be destroyed here but good men must suffer with them, as I have already showed you at large: and therefore bad men cannot be finally punished, nor good men finally rewarded, till they are first parted; for to root up the tares here, signifies the final extirpation and destruction of all bad men. not the casting bad men out of the communion of the church; nay, nor putting heretics to death, to which some apply these words; which were it reconcileable with the other laws, and with the genius and spirit of Christianity, as it is not, would be as reconcileable with this parable as the execution of any other malefactor is: this may be done without destroying the wheat, nay, in some cases the wheat may be preserved by it; for the punishment and

execution of some bad men is necessary to preserve the innocent : but when the tares are more than the wheat, grow close together, and are entangled in each other, as the interests of good and bad men are intermixed and interwoven in this world, there is great reason to spare the tares for the sake of the wheat.

But the tares must not expect to escape thus always; a wise householder in the time of harvest will order the reapers to separate between the tares and the wheat, and then the tares shall be burnt, and the wheat gathered into the barn; and thus Christ will separate between good and bad men at the last judgment, and allot them very different portions. All this is very reasonable; thus a wise man will do, and therefore, this we must expect from the wise and just Judge of the world.

This parable of the wheat and tares, which grew together in the same field, represents the mixture of believers and infidels, the Christian church and the men of this world here; but the following parable of the net, *ver. 27*. "which was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind," represents the mixture of good and bad men in the communion of the Christian church: for thus our Saviour tells his apostles, that he would make them "fishers of men;" and gave them a figure of the success of their ministry in that miraculous draught of fishes after they had toiled all the night, and had taken nothing, *Luke v. 5, 6*, which he repeated again after his resurrection from the dead, *John xxi. 6*, &c. So that the net signifies the communion of the Christian church, which gathers both good and bad; but, when this "net is drawn to shore, they gather the good into vessels, but cast the bad away;" that is, at the end of the world, the angels shall not only separate between the church and the world, between believers and infidels, but between good and bad Christians, who live together in the same communion in this world: "The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Thus we see in these parables our Saviour does not only prove that God will judge the world, but convinces us of the necessity and reasonableness of this, by appealing to the common rules of prudence and justice among men. Thus all wise and just princes and householders will do, destroy traitors and rebels, revenge the abuse of their favours, call their stewards to an account, reward the labours and improvements of faithful servants, and punish the slothful and unprofitable; separate the wheat and tares at harvest, though they grow up together in the same field; and separate between the good and bad fish, though caught in the same net: and therefore thus God will do, who is not less wise, and just, and holy, than men are. And this gives authority to all the arguments for a future judgment drawn from the

reason and nature of things. Thus our Saviour reasons, and thus he has taught us to reason; for the fundamental principle on which all these parables rest is this, That whatever is manifestly just, and wise, and reasonable for men to do, that God will do. If this be not true, the parables of our Saviour have his authority, but have no reason, though the nature of such parables is an appeal to the reason of mankind: and if this be true, then we may argue thus in other cases, which are equally plain and obvious, and are founded upon the same reason; which gives a kind of divine authority to the plain and necessary dictates of reason in this matter: and then I am sure I have furnished you with reasons enough already for the belief of a future judgment.

3. The whole Christian religion is founded on and adapted to the belief of a future judgment, and is a very unintelligible institution without it: and therefore this must be a first principle to all who call themselves Christians, if they understand the religion they profess. As, to show this particularly:

1. The chief promises and threatenings of the gospel relate to the other world; "Godliness," indeed, "hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come;" but the temporal promises made to a holy and virtuous life are such as worldly-minded men cannot much value; they extend no farther than food and raiment, to "our daily bread," which is all our Saviour hath taught us to pray for; and therefore it teaches us, "having food and raiment, therewith to be content." But who could be contented with such a scanty provision while he sees the greater prosperity of bad men who dissolve in ease and luxury, were there not a happy state reserved for them in the next world? Where is the man who would not comply with the devil's temptation to fall down and worship him for all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, were he not to lose a brighter and richer crown for it? Sometimes indeed God does bless good men with great plenty and honour, but he has no where promised to do so in the gospel of Christ: sometimes he does it not so much to reward good men (for temporal things are not the proper rewards of piety and virtue) as to serve the ends of his Providence in the world: he takes care of good men to supply their wants and necessities here, which is all that a perfect virtue requires; but he rewards them hereafter. And yet this is not absolutely promised neither; for our Saviour teaches us to take up his cross, to expect sufferings and persecutions for his name's sake; and then we must be contented to want food and raiment, to part with houses and lands, and life itself, for his sake; and our condition may be so afflicted and calamitous here, that it may force us to say, as St Paul does, "If in this life only

" we had hope, we were of all men the most miserable." And who would be the disciple of Christ upon these terms? to suffer so much for him in this world, and to gain nothing by it in the next.

Thus, on the other hand, there is a terrible vengeance threatened against wicked men in the next world, " Lakes of fire and brimstone; " blackness of darkness; the worm that never dieth, and the fire that " never goeth out;" but the gospel threatens no temporal punishment against sin. Bad men are very often punished in this world when the wisdom of the Divine Providence sees fit, and they very often escape too, and are much more prosperous than good men are here: that there is no threatening in the gospel to restrain the impieties of men but only the fears of the other world, and a future judgment; and if you take away these you destroy the gospel of our Saviour.

2. Many of our Saviour's laws are founded on the supposition of a future judgment, and are so extremely unreasonable, if there be no rewards or punishments after this life, that, if we will but allow him the ordinary prudence of a lawgiver, a future judgment must be the foundation of his religion.

If there were no other life after this, the only rules of our actions would be to live as long, and to enjoy as much of this world, as we can. But the Christian religion, in many cases, will not allow of this; and therefore is no religion for this world, were there not another world to follow.

To begin with the enjoyments of this world: How many restraints does the Christian religion lay on us, to lessen the pleasures and satisfactions of this life? It teaches us a great indifferency to all the things of this world; but how unreasonable is that if this world be our only place of happiness? For who can be indifferent whether he be happy or not? It commands us to mortify our sensual appetites; to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts; to live above the pleasures of the body; to pluck out our right eyes, and to cut off our right hands: but what reason can there be to deny ourselves any of these enjoyments, as far as is consistent with preserving our health, and prolonging our lives, if we have no expectations after death? Nay, if men are contented to live a short and a merry life, what hurt is there in it, if death puts an end to them? It forbids us to lay up for ourselves treasures on earth, which were a strange command, were there not greater treasures to be expected in heaven: it forbids earthly pride and ambition, and affectation of secular honours and power; but why must we submit to meanness and contempt in this world, if this be the only scene of action we shall ever be concerned in? For a mean and base spirit is no virtue; and for the same reason it can be no virtue to be contented with a low fortune; to be patient under sufferings, which, if they will never be re-

warded, is to be patiently miserable, and that is stupidity and folly; but to have our conversation in heaven, to live upon the hopes of unseen things, is madness and distraction, if there be no heaven, no unseen things for us.

The laws of our Saviour require us, in some cases, to sacrifice the dearest interests we have in this world, and life itself, for his sake; which is a senseless and unreasonable command, if he does not intend to bestow a better life on us. If there were no other life after this, no wise man would forfeit more for any religion than it is worth in this world, and that would reach but a little way in sufferings. Nor is our Saviour so unreasonable as to require it upon these terms, but tells us plainly, "Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" *Mat. xvi. 25, 26.* The reasons of most of the evangelical commands must be fetched wholly from the other world, and a future judgment; and therefore we should have had the same evidence for a judgment to come that we have for the Christian religion, though there had been no such express mention made of a future judgment.

I cannot but observe here the true reason of the corruption of Christian morals, which are as much corrupted as the Christian faith is: that in expounding the laws of our Saviour, some men have no other regard but to fit them to the ease and the conveniencies of this life, and therefore reject any interpretation of them which is severe to flesh and blood, or will hazard their ease and fortunes in this world. It is sufficient to confute any law of our Saviour, or to interpret it away, to show that there are great temporal inconveniencies in it; that to observe such laws in such a sense would be very injurious to men's present interest, and deprive them of many pleasures and advantages of life.

It were easy to give many instances of this; but it shall suffice at present to confess, that, considering the state of this world, and the propensities and inclinations of human nature, some laws of our Saviour are very unreasonable, were there not a future judgment to reward the severities and sufferings which good men must undergo in observing of them; and therefore we must have a care of rejecting any plain and express law of our Saviour for any temporal inconvenience which attends it, or to think that the best sense of the Christian law which is most for the ease and comfort of this life.

This may serve for the proof of a future judgment; for if this will not prove it, nothing will. There are indeed another sort of arguments to prove it, but they principally relate to the person of our Judge,

or who shall be our Judge, viz. the Son of man, Christ Jesus, who is God-incarnate, and to which St. Paul refers, *Act. xvii. 31.* "That God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead:" but I shall defer that till I come to speak of the person of our Judge.

S E C T. VI.

The improvements of this doctrine in some practical inferences; as,

1. *To live as it becomes those who shall certainly be judged.*
2. *To keep our eye upon a future Judgment for the government of our lives.*

HAVING thus proved the certainty of a future judgment, both from reason and Scripture, before I proceed, it is necessary to consider how we must improve this belief for the government of our lives; for that is the only end of faith and knowledge: and if we be never the better men for our faith, we may as well be infidels.

And this I shall do in these following particulars:

I. To live as it becomes those who shall certainly be judged. I suppose I need not prove this consequence, that those who must be judged ought to live as those who must be judged. For if judgment be of any concernment to us, I am sure it is of great concernment to prepare ourselves for judgment: and if we must be judged for eternity, judgment is of as great concernment to us as eternal life and death. Nor is there any great difficulty to know how those men ought to live who must be judged; every man knows this without a teacher, who will give himself leave to think. A steward, a factor, a labourer, any person who is liable to the censure and judgment of a superior, who will call him to an account, knows what he is to do to prepare his accounts; and there is no greater mystery in preparing ourselves for God's judgment than for the judgment of men. But because all men will not consider things as they ought, though they be ever so plain and obvious, I shall briefly suggest some rules to you, which you must all acknowledge very reasonable at the first hearing; and which, if well observed, would make us lift up our heads in the day of judgment, and expect it without astonishment and terror.

If we must be judged, it becomes us to act with great consideration and advice: rashness, precipitancy, inadvertency, to do we know not what, in a heat and impetus, without considering whether it be good or evil, right or wrong, does not become those who must be judged.

To be judged is to be called to an account, to give a reason for what we do, and therefore we ought to consider what reason to give before we do it. We must be judged by a rule, as you shall hear more hereafter, and therefore we ought to live by rule too, which no man can do who does not consider well what he does before he does it. It will be an ill plea at the day of judgment to say, that we did not consider what we did; that we lived without care, without thought, without observation; for this is not an allowable plea for a reasonable creature, much less for one who knows he must be judged. For why did you live without thought, without consideration? Had you not the power of thinking, of reasoning, of considering? and did not God give these powers and faculties to you to direct and govern your lives? Did he not make you reasonable creatures, that you might consider and live by reason? and is it an excuse then for a reasonable creature that he lived and acted without reason and a wise consideration of things? This is the great degeneracy of human nature, the abuse and corruption of those natural powers which God hath given us, the source of all the evils that are in this world, and therefore can be no excuse; much less when we know that God will judge us, and require a reason of our actions. For, not to consider our own ways when we know God considers them, and will require an account of them, is a contempt of his judgment: for, did we reverence our Judge, we must consider. And yet how many mad, extravagant, wicked actions are there daily committed, which those who do them never think why they do them, nor what reasonable account they can give of them either to God or man?

Some men are very fond of what they call a frolic; that is, to lay aside all thought and consideration, and to give themselves up to the government of every sudden and unaccountable fancy, and the more wild and extravagant it is, the more entertaining, without any regard to virtue or vice, to decency and honour, the least thought of which is a profanation of these Bedlam mysteries. They drink themselves drunk in a frolic, blaspheme God and his Son JESUS CHRIST, and his most holy religion; abuse wives and virgins, murder innocent people, and affront all they meet, in a frolic: but it is ridiculous to imagine, if we must be judged, that such frolics as these shall be allowed in the account, or pass for ciphers and empty scenes of life, to signify no more than they were intended for; that because we chuse at such a time to act without reason and consideration, therefore God shall demand no reason nor account of such actions.

And yet a very great part of the world, though they do not run into such outrageous frolics as these are, yet their lives are little better than a train of incoherent and independent fancies and humours:

they live without thought or any wise design; any extempore project has them, which starts up in their minds, or strikes their fancies. They scarce know what they have to do the next day, nor how they spent the last. But is this a life for men who are to be judged?

Others there are who give themselves up to the government of their passions, which are so vehement and impetuous, and always in so much haste, that they will neither hear reason, nor allow any time for it: And then no wonder if they do such things as they can give no good account of when their passion is over.

Others are more fixed and resolved in their way; they have chose such a course of life as they like best, and they are resolved to pursue it, and that nothing should put them out of it; and therefore they resolve against thinking too, lest that should disturb them, and give a check to their enjoyments. They will neither listen to their own consciences, nor hearken to the importunities of their friends, nor be persuaded to consider what the probable end of all their actions will be, both in this world and in the next.

These are all unthinking, unconsidering sinners: but you will all confess that these men do not live as if they were to be judged. And therefore, if we believe that we shall be judged, none of us ought to live thus. We ought to consider well beforehand what we do, that we may be able to give a reasonable account of it when we have done it: for if we must give a reason of our actions when we have done them, we ought to know a reason for them before we do them; and therefore we must accustom our minds to a grave and serious consideration of things, to live by reason, not by humour and fancy; not by the impetus and fury of passion, which is a very ill counsellor, much less to pursue our lusts with an affected and resolved ignorance and blindness. For all this will not prevent our being judged, but will make us very unable to give a good account of ourselves when we are.

2. As we must act with great consideration, so we must make it the standing principle and rule of our lives, never to do any thing but what we can give a good account of; either what we know is our duty, or at least what we are satisfied is very lawful and innocent to be done. For if we do those things which we cannot account for, for which our own minds condemn us, how can we appear with any hope and confidence at the tribunal of God? When men transgress a known duty they are self-condemned, and God need not judge them, but only execute the sentence and judgment of their own conscience. To believe that God will judge us, and yet to venture upon such actions for which our own consciences condemn us, and for which we know God will as certainly condemn us as our own consciences do, is folly and distraction: since we must be judged, our great care and concernment

should be, that when we are judged we may not be condemned; and the most effectual way to prevent this is to do nothing which our consciences condemn. It is possible indeed that men who sin wilfully against a known duty may recover themselves by repentance, and obtain mercy through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ: but it does not become any man, who believes a judgment, "to sin, that grace may abound." These hopes very often deceive men, and will always do so, till they come to this resolution never to violate a known duty, to provoke the justice, or to exercise the patience and forbearance, of God. There is no other way to escape the condemnation of the last judgment but by a resolved obedience to the divine laws; and therefore, if we believe we shall be judged, nothing can be more necessary, nor more becoming, than to make this the constant rule of our actions, never to do any thing for which we know God will condemn us; nothing but what we can account for, and then we shall be prepared for judgment whenever it comes.

3. It becomes those who must be judged to judge themselves, and to take a frequent and impartial account of their own lives and actions. This is no more than every steward does, who casts up his books, and adjusts his accounts himself, before he presents them to his lord. The truth is, it is impossible for any man, who knows he shall be judged, not to be very solicitous to know what his judgment shall be: and this every man may in a great measure know, who impartially examines his own conscience. For so St John tells us, "If our heart (or conscience) condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things: but if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God," 1 John iii. 20, 21. So that if our lives have been innocent and virtuous, and such as a well-informed conscience approves, this will give infinite peace and satisfaction to us, and fill us with divine joys, with a plethora of hope and assurance: but if we should not find things so well, though, upon such a strict examination, our consciences should be very quarrelsome and uneasy, and threaten the vengeance of God against us; yet it is much more desirable to hear our consciences chide and condemn us than to hear our final sentence from the mouth of our Judge, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." The judgment of conscience is not final, for conscience is rather our monitor than our judge; it tells us what will be, if we do not take care to prevent it, not what certainly is, and shall be; and therefore we have this advantage by the rebukes and censures of conscience, to know what is amiss, and what we must correct and amend.

May, a frequent examination of ourselves would keep a perpetual watch and guard upon our lives. After our greatest care and caution,

a great many things will be hastily done and said, which we cannot reconcile with the rules of prudence and decency and strict virtue: but he who frequently calls himself to an account, and observes all these defects which, it may be, other men are never sensible of, will attain an habitual caution and watchfulness, and improve into great exactness of conversation, and all the graces and beauties of virtue. Some of the philosophers thought it a very good rule, to call themselves to an account every night for what they had done that day; which would make us reverence ourselves and our own consciences. But there is much more reason to do so, when we remember that God observes all our actions, and will judge us for them. The judgment of our consciences, as I observed to you before, is a natural preface of God's judgment. For there is no other reason why our consciences should judge us, but that God will: and then the reason is very strong also, that if God will judge us, we ought to judge ourselves; for this is the proper office and ministry of conscience, in subordination to the judgment of God.

II. Let us keep our eye perpetually on a future judgment, for the direction and government of our lives; for this will furnish us with such principles of action as cannot be so well learnt by any other way.

1. As first, It teaches us, above all things, to take care to approve ourselves to God, which is the only principle of true religion and universal obedience. Nothing is an act of religion but as it respects God, and is referred wholly to him: to perform all the acts of worship, though with never so great pomp and ceremony, and external appearances of devotion; to do never so many good actions, to be seen and to be praised by men, or to serve some secular interest by it, is not religion: but some men, if they meet with what they expected, have their reward, all that they deserve, and all that they proposed to themselves; their religion is a courtship to men, not the worship of God. And this principle will reach but a little way, only to some external and popular acts, and is calculated only for the prosperous times of religion, when it is in fashion and reputation, and will give men credit, and raise their fortunes in the world. But those who are religious, and do good for God's sake, to approve themselves to him, have a steady and universal principle of righteousness, which is as certain and immutable as God is; and if God will certainly judge us, if we must receive our final doom and sentence from his mouth, I know not whom we are concerned to please but him; I am sure none in opposition to him. As for instance: the censures of the world are a great temptation to most men; when, instead of praise and honour, an unfashionable virtue meets with infamy, and reproach, and publick scorn. But St. Paul's answer will fit all such cases; "It is required in stewards

“ that a man be found faithful; but with me it is a very small thing
 “ that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment:—he that
 “ judgeth me is the Lord,” 1 Cor. iv. 2, 3, 4. While we can approve
 ourselves to God, that “ in simplicity and godly sincerity we have our
 “ conversation in this world,” the different judgments of men ought
 to be despised. Whatever sentence they pronounce can have no ef-
 fect; for they are not our judges, but must be judged themselves. And
 if we can appeal to God, who is our judge, all the rest is but pageantry
 and children’s sport, a ludicrous imitation of judgment, which some-
 times ends comically enough, when their parents or masters happen to
 see them; the judge and jury are whipt, and the condemned innocent
 escapes. But what will it avail us, when we come before God’s tri-
 bunal, that we have been not only absolved, but praised, admired,
 applauded by men, who are incompetent, ignorant, or partial judges?

So that, if God be our Judge, we have nothing else to do but to ap-
 prove ourselves to him; we have but one master to please, and he more
 easily pleased, too, than men commonly are, who are never all of a
 mind, and therefore can never all be pleased; and seldom continue
 long of the same mind, and therefore cannot always be pleased. Our
 Saviour himself experienced this inconstancy, when the loudest hosanna’s
 in three or four days’ time were changed into, Crucify him.

So little regard is there to be had to the good or bad opinion of
 men, no wise man will be contented to stand or fall by; and whoever
 makes this the principle of his actions can never be a good man long.
 But he who approves himself to God, will like religion never the worse
 for being reproached; will be contented with the private applause of
 his own conscience, to shelter him against the most outrageous ob-
 loquies; will take as great care of the frame and disposition of his
 mind as of his outward actions; because though men cannot see his
 heart, God does; will be as devout in his closet as in church; will
 fast without any external show and appearance of fasting, and give
 alms without the sound of a trumpet, with such secrecy, as if it were
 possible to conceal it from himself, that “ his left hand shall not know
 “ what his right does.” For he is not concerned that men should know
 any thing of this; and nothing is so secret but God knows it; and
 “ his Father which seeth in secret, shall reward him openly,” *Matth.*
vi. 1, &c.

2. As we must approve ourselves to God who is our Judge, so we
 must fetch the reasons and motives of obedience from a future judg-
 ment; from those rewards God has promised to bestow at that day
 on good men, and those punishments he will inflict upon the wicked:
 these, as far as concerns rewards and punishments, are the only gospel-
 motives of obedience: I say, as far as concerns rewards and punish-

ments ; because there are other gospel-motives of obedience besides rewards and punishments ; such as the great love of God in giving his Son for us ; the great love of Christ in giving himself a sacrifice for us, which is a powerful obligation on us " to live to him who died " for us ; " and the powerful assistances of the Holy Spirit " to work in us " both to will and to do," which renders our obedience possible and easy. But the motives of obedience from the rewards of virtue, and punishment of wickedness, must be fetched from a future judgment : for these unseen and absent rewards and punishments are the only object of faith ; which " is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," *Heb. xi. 1.* And faith is the only true principle of gospel-obedience. Present rewards and punishments were the motives of the Mosaical covenant, and this is a legal spirit, to serve God in expectation of a present reward, or for fear of some temporal punishment. But future rewards and punishments are the motives of the gospel, the exercise of faith, and the true spirit of sons. He not observing which was the occasion of that foolish mistake, that to serve God for a reward is a legal and servile spirit. Which is true, if we speak of present and temporal rewards, but not of those which are spiritual and eternal. And if we will be true and sincere Christians, here we must fix our eye, and with Moses, have respect to a future recompense of reward ; for no other motives will fit at all times, nor conquer all temptations, nor extend to all acts of religion.

Those who serve God for a present reward, to make their fortunes in this world, must quit his service when religion exposes them to sufferings in persecutions, and to the loss of all things for Christ's sake. Those who abstain from sin for fear of some temporal punishments, must commit such sins when they shall suffer more by not committing them. When men serve God for temporal hopes or fears, whenever the world promises greater prosperity, or threatens more terrible things, they must necessarily change their master ; for they must take that side on which the present advantage lies.

Good men sometimes meet with a reward in this world ; virtue may in some junctures make men rich and honourable ; but whoever courts virtue for riches and honours will never court a poor and despised virtue ; that is, he does not indeed court virtue, but riches and honours ; and will rather take as much virtue with them as is necessary to that purpose than go without them ; but riches and honours, with or without virtue, are always welcome. Whoever makes the advantages of this life, his reasons and motives to virtue will do no more good than will advance his present interest, and will be good no longer ; and this is a very sorry virtue ; it had need have some reward in this world, for it will have none in the next.

Those temporal promises which are contained in the gospel were never intended by our Saviour as the rewards or motives of our obedience, but only to encourage and support us in our pilgrimage in this world; that if "we seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;" if we give up ourselves to the obedience of the gospel, and live upon the hopes of unseen things, and lay up treasures in heaven, "all other things shall be added unto us:" God will provide what is needful for our passage through this world, whatever difficulties and discouragements we may meet with from men.

The design of the gospel is to take our hearts from this world; to teach us not to lay up for ourselves treasures on earth, but in heaven; not to love this world; nor the things that are in the world: and therefore it is impossible that temporal blessings should be a gospel motive. Nothing in this world can be a motive, unless we love the world; and therefore, this can be no motive of the Christian religion which teaches us not to love the world, unless the love of the world can be a proper motive and argument to make us despise it, and live above it.

And therefore, I confess, I have sometimes wished that there had been less stress laid upon the temporal rewards and advantages of virtue to persuade men to religion; and upon the temporal evils and miseries of sin to discourage men from it. For this is not always true; and if it were, it is an argument which will persuade no man; and if it did, it cannot advance them to the heights and perfections of a Christian virtue, and therefore is no gospel-motive. As for instance:

Some virtues are very healthful, prolong our lives, and prevent a great many painful and mortal diseases, which the contrary vices expose men to; such as temperance and chastity: other virtues are very proper methods of thriving in the world; such as diligence, prudence, justice: others give us reputation and honour, advance us to rule and empire, and public trusts. Now, this is sometimes true, and sometimes not, as the state of the world now is, as I showed you before; that whatever natural efficacy virtue may have to make men happy, or vice to make them miserable, this may be in a great measure defeated by the external circumstances of our condition in this world. And therefore this can never be a motive; that is, it cannot be a reason why we should chuse virtue, because it is not always a reason; nay, it is as often a reason for vice as for virtue: and if it be a good reason for one, I cannot see why it should not be a good reason for the other. For if it be a reason at all, it is reason for that side on which at present it is, whether that be virtue or vice. Indeed these temporal advantages of virtue are not so much reasons for virtue, as against vice; and that too only against such vices, or such degrees and instances of

vice, as are destructive to men's health, or fortunes, or reputation. However, this reason, be it what it will, will reach no farther than to such a degree of virtue as will contribute to a happy and prosperous life in this world, and therefore will not raise us above this world, will not teach us to despise riches and honours, and bodily pleasures; nay, is not consistent with a mean value, and great indifferency, to present things; and therefore it cannot make us Christians, and is a very improper argument to persuade men to be Christians: it never made a Christian yet; and never will do.

And therefore, let us not think to conquer the deceits and flatteries of the world and the flesh with such arguments as these, which have no strength in them; which are more apt to make men fond of this world than to conquer it: "But this is our victory which overcomes" the world, even our faith;" the hope and fear of unseen things, or a future judgment, when God will eternally reward good men, and punish the wicked. This is an argument in all times, and in all conditions: it will make us despise the world when it smiles and flatters, and scorn its frowns. Here are hopes too big for this world, and fears too great and powerful for its fears: such hopes as can support us under the greatest sufferings; such fears as can imbitter all the sweets of sin; and therefore let us keep the future judgment always in our eye; let us fetch our supports and comforts from thence; let us oppose these hopes and fears against all temptations, for here is our strength; all other arguments are easily baffled, but nothing can answer the argument of eternal life and death.

S E C T. VII.

Third inference: To refer all judgment to God.

III. **I**F God will certainly judge the world, let us refer all judgment to God; or, as St. Paul speaks, "I therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart; and then shall every man have praise of God," 1 Cor. iv. 5. Nothing is more indecent, nor more dangerous, than for men, who must be judged themselves, to take God's work out of his hands, and to assume a prætorian power to judge, acquit, and condemn, whom they please, without expecting the judgment of God. To judge is God's prerogative, and he will judge the world: and "what hast thou to do to judge another man's servant? To his own master he shall stand or fall." Why so much haste to prevent the judgment of God, by our rash, ignorant, uncharitable judgments? Judgment will

come time enough for us all, "and therefore judge nothing before the time."

This is so common a fault, and does so much mischief in the world, and yet is so very unreasonable, considering a future judgment, that it will be of great use to discourse it more particularly, and, if it be possible, to correct this miscarriage, which is one of the greatest plagues of human society.

It is very obvious to ask here, What is the fault of this? Is there any living in the world without judging of men and things? must we not say that he is a very bad man whom we see do very bad things? must we not distinguish between virtue and vice, and between good and bad men? Must we not make good men our friends, commend and imitate their virtues; and reject the conversation of the wicked, and beware of knaves and men of ill principles and designs? and is it not necessary then to distinguish between good and bad men? that is, to judge who are so. Must we wholly refer the punishment of wickedness, and the rewards of virtue, to the day of judgment? and because God will judge the world, must not princes and magistrates execute justice, and separate between the pure and the vile?

This is so very unreasonable, so inconsistent with the wise conduct and government of our lives and a prudent care of ourselves, so destructive to human societies, gives such encouragement to wickedness, and so confounds the distinction of good and evil, that I need not tell any man that this is not meant by referring all judgment to God: we must judge of men and things as far as is necessary to the prudent government of our lives, and to the preservation of peace, and justice, and good order, in the world. This does not intrench upon a future judgment, nor upon God's prerogative of being the sole Judge of the world, but is necessary in this present state of things; so necessary, that neither public societies, nor private persons, can be safe without it. But then we assume such a judgment to ourselves as belongs only to God, when we judge men's hearts, and secret thoughts and intentions, and when we pass judgment on their final state.

1st, When we judge men's hearts, and thoughts, and secret intentions; for the heart of man is known only to himself, and to God, who is the searcher of hearts; and the counsels of the heart will never be made manifest till God comes to judge the world.

Indeed no man will pretend to know another man's heart; and yet it is too plain, in many cases, that men undertake to judge of hearts: and the great fault in judging is, that whether men will own it or no, yet they undertake to judge of hearts.

Thus all those do who charge men with more guilt than is visible in their actions; for if we can discover any guilt which is not visible

in their actions, we must look into their hearts, and thoughts, and intentions, to find it.

Thus those who do charge men with guilt upon account of innocent and indifferent actions, which have no necessary good or evil in them, but are, as they are taken, and as they were intended; and those who can find any hurt in such actions as have no intrinsic evil and mischief in them, must find it in the heart.

Especially those who judge and condemn men for the most virtuous actions, for the most inimitable examples of piety and devotion, and charity, and a severe and mortified life; and call this affectation and popularity, and Pharisaism, and charge them with carrying on some worldly and secular designs under the mask and disguise of religion. Now, I grant this may be done, and sometimes it may be visible enough, as it was in the Pharisees; but to charge any man with this, without some plain and manifest indication of it, is to judge their hearts when we know nothing of them.

Nay, to charge men with the utmost possible guilt, even of their bad actions, is to judge their hearts; for it is to say, that they have done such a wicked action with all the internal wickedness of heart and mind which such an action can be committed with, which no man can say without judging the heart.

The same wicked action may be the effect either of ignorance or of knowledge; of rashness and surprise, or of mature and deliberate counsel; of habitual wickedness, or of some accidental temptation; of our own free choice, or the persuasion of friends, and the enticements of our companions, and the prevalency of shame or fear. Now, this makes a vast difference in the guilt and sin; and if the same action may have different degrees of guilt, we must charge it with no more than what is visible, unless we will undertake to judge the secrets of hearts.

Thus to charge a man with acting against his conscience, when he himself declares a full satisfaction in what he does, or to say that he only pretends conscience, when it is nothing but humour or pride, and popularity or interest, and politics, is to judge men's hearts; for these things are not to be known without knowing men's hearts. There may be great symptoms, and strong presumptions, that some men have no conscience at all, or no regard to it; for those who, in the general course of their lives, govern themselves by no rule, are ridiculous when they pretend to conscience in any thing; but those who, in their other actions, show that they are men of conscience, ought to be believed when they pretend conscience, unless there be a manifest evidence to the contrary.

All these things belong to the judgment of God, who will judge

the secrets of men's hearts by the gospel of Christ; but we are not concerned to judge of them, for it serves no good end, but does very great mischief to the world.

All the ends of human government, both in church and state, may be attained without this; for human governments do not pretend to judge men's thoughts and hearts, any otherwise than as they are declared in words and actions, and some very plain and significant circumstances, which betray and speak their intentions and designs: human governments take notice only of what appears, and this is sufficient to secure the external purity of the church, and to preserve justice and good order in the state; but the mischief of judging men's thoughts and hearts is chiefly seen in private conversation

How often does this dissolve the most intimate friendships, and beget mortal quarrels, that men read each others thoughts and hearts in their actions, and very often read very false, and directly contrary to the sense of the original: when an indiscreet word or action is interpreted a designed affront, and a careless or forgetful neglect is thought a contempt; when an intended kindness miscarries and proves an injury, and is then thought to be intended so. It is easily observed, that mere actions anger no man, and make no quarrel for we can easily bear with that from one whom we believe to be our friend, which we will not bear with from a stranger, or a supposed enemy or rival: but when men apprehend a thing ill intended, then they take it ill; that is, they judge men's hearts and intentions which they cannot see, and which they often mistake, and that makes the quarrel.

Another mischief of this judging is, that many times the most exemplary virtue is greatly discouraged, and the most useful men eclipsed, and made unserviceable to the world. When the most conspicuous piety, and devotion, and charity, is accused of pride, ambition, popularity, or some other base and low design, it makes such good men afraid of appearing good, to avoid the suspicion of being vain and wicked; it makes their examples useless to the world; for men will be afraid to imitate them, when they who set the example got nothing but an ill name by it: it makes some men think that all religion is a cheat, and has nothing but this world at the bottom, when the more zealous men appear in doing good the more they are suspected of hypocrisy and worldly designs.

And thus, on the other hand, (as we know mankind are very partial in their affections), when those who do very wicked actions shall still be thought good men, and maintain their reputation in the world, as having the root of the matter in them, though they are not without their failings: this makes men believe that they may be good and

yet live wickedly, if they do but take care of their hearts; and they can easily persuade themselves that their hearts are very good.

It were easy to reckon up a great many mischiefs of this judging men's hearts, especially when censures fall upon the ministers of religion, which weakens their authority, and counsels, and examples, and reproofs; which was the case of St. Paul himself, who, it seems, was censured on all hands, but appeals from man's judgment to the judgment of God: "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not myself: for I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall every man have praise of God," 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4, 5.

Let us then judge of men's actions according to those rules of good and evil which the gospel has given us, but leave their hearts to God, who alone knows the secrets of hearts, and who alone can judge them; this is God's prerogative, and it is presumption in us to intermeddle with it; and, worse than that, it is very dangerous too, with respect to our own account at the last judgment, as our Saviour tells us, *Mat. vii. 1, 2.* "Judge not, that ye be not judged: for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you again." So that, if we will judge, we ought to be favourable and charitable in our judgment, if we desire to be judged favourably by God: and I believe there is none of us but will confess that we stand in need of a very favourable judgment; that God should make great allowances for the weakness, ignorance, and folly, mistakes, inadvertencies, surprises, temptations of human nature: and if we are so far from making any favourable allowances for the miscarriages of our brethren, that we search into their very hearts and thoughts to find something to quarrel with; either to aggravate visible faults, or to turn appearing and visible virtues into faults; what may we expect from the just and righteous Judge of the world? It is a known rule of righteousness to do as we would be done to; and all mankind think it very just to suffer what we do, to receive the same measure we mete to others; and, therefore, we may make a law to ourselves, and, by a severe, rigorous, uncharitable, judgment of men, make God, not an unjust, but yet a severe and rigorous judge of us; and "if he be severe to mark what we have done amiss, who can stand before him?"

2dly, As we must not judge men's hearts and thoughts, much less must we judge their final state; to condemn them to eternal miseries, or to advance them to eternal glories, as we please: for this is to pre-

judge the judgment of God, and to prescribe to him whom he shall save, and whom he shall damn, by our own biased and partial affection. It becomes us to take care of our own accounts, and to leave other men to the merciful judgment of God. It is an argument of a very ill temper of mind when men are hasty and forward in pronouncing the sentence of damnation against others; it looks as if they had a mind such men should be damned, as if they would direct God what to do, lest he should be too merciful. It is enough for us to consider what the terms of salvation are which the gospel has proposed to us, and to take care to perform these terms ourselves: whether other men have performed them or not it is none of our business to judge; that God will do when he comes to judge the world; but all pious and charitable Christians, who consider what it is to be damned, are very unwilling to pronounce this sentence upon any man.

Our church has been extremely blamed by some men for that charity she has expressed in her office of burial towards all that die in her communion, when she teaches us to pray, "We meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that, when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him, as our hope is this our brother doth:" and yet it may be the person then buried is known to have lived a very wicked and profligate life; and how can we express our hope of the salvation of such a man?

Now, the truth is, our church never intended this office of burial for men of profligate lives no more than she intended that such men should live and die in the communion: for this office is only for those who die in her communion of the church; and, were church discipline duly exercised, all such notorious sinners must have been flung out of church-communion. And those who raise the clamour about this have been one great hinderance of exercising discipline, having weakened the power and authority of the church by their schisms and factions: but, taking things as they are, I confess I can see no impiety in it, nor any such mighty fault as is pretended. The church does not pretend to judge any man's final state, how wicked soever his life was; that is God's work, and she leaves them to him; and what great fault is it to hope well, when we cannot pretend to know enough of the worst of men, especially of the end and conclusion of their lives, to pass a final sentence on them? There are a great many degrees of hope, and one degree but the next remove from despair; that is, but the next remove from pronouncing damnation against them; and if we must not do that we may say we hope still. Suppose, our hope be no more than a charitable wish, how can that offend God that we wish well even to very bad men? An excess of charity, an unwillingness that any man should be eternally miserable, is no fault; I am sure it

is a greater to pronounce the final sentence of damnation against any man.

But it is said, that this encourages his wicked companions, who attend his funeral, to hope they may be saved too, though they persist in their wickedness to the last, as he did. Now, indeed, what little matters may encourage such men in sin I cannot say; but there is no reason that a fair and charitable wish should do this. If they know the gospel of Christ, they know that he has threatened eternal damnation against all impenitent sinners: if they know the doctrine of the church, they know she teaches the very same thing; if they saw their wicked companion die, they saw his dying horrors and agonies too, which few of them die without, if they have any time to consider their state. And, when they know and see all this, is there any reason to hope they shall be saved in their wickedness, only because the church will not damn them, but reserves them to the judgment of God, and sends her charitable wishes after them? At least, this can be no encouragement, when they are forewarned before-hand of it; which is the chief reason why I take notice of it at this time.

Upon the same principle I am not ashamed to own I have always been averse to that dispute about the salvation of Heathens; for this is to sit in judgment on three parts of the world, and I am not the judge of the world, nor of any part of it: and yet I know not what character and censures this plain confession may bring upon me; for some men do as peremptorily damn all the Heathen world as if it were an article of their creed, and think all those enemies to the grace of Christ who do not; but, for my part, I dare neither damn nor save them, for I know nothing of the matter.

By what rule God will judge the Heathen world I cannot tell. St. Paul tells us, "As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law," *Rom. ii. 12*. And there is the same reason as to the gospel too, that those who never heard of the gospel shall be judged without the gospel: and who can tell what this signifies, what mighty allowances God may make for their invincible ignorances, and the unhappy circumstances of their education? Who can tell how little God will accept from those to whom he has given little? I am sure our Saviour tells us, "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more," *Luke xii. 48*. which, by a parity of reason, supposes, that where God has given little he requires little. St. Paul seems to intimate a very favourable judgment which such men shall have, and a vast difference that God makes between the times of Pagan ignorance and the light of the gospel: "The times of this ig-

"norance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where "to repent: because he hath appointed a day," &c. *Acts* xvii. 30, 31. where God's winking at the times of ignorance must signify that he is not so severe and curious an observer of their actions, nor so strict to mark what is amiss, nor so rigorous in exacting punishment, as he will be now. They are in the hands of God, and there we ought to leave them, with this general persuasion, that God will be very just and very merciful in judging them; and this eases my mind of a great many troublesome thoughts. I know not what pleasure other men take in it, but it is terrible to me when I consider what eternal damnation is, to think that so much the greatest part of the world, who never had the means and opportunities of salvation, as we have, shall be eternally damned. I dare judge nothing; but that great love I have for mankind inclines me to hope better for them, (as far as the circumstances of their condition will admit of a favourable judgment); and that strong persuasion I have of the justice and goodness of God inclines me to believe better of him; for so I am apt to think that the merciful side of the question is more agreeable to the divine Justice and Goodness.

Such another curious question is that about the salvation of infants, who die before they know good or evil, especially the children of Heathen parents. Now, it is certain, they have no legal and covenant-title to salvation, nor have they any thing of their own to answer for, but that original guilt they contracted by their birth: now, God has not told us how he will judge these infants, nor are we concerned to know.

The infants of Christian parents indeed have a covenant-title to salvation; for the "promise is made to us, and to our children:" and to say, that "such children dying after baptism, before they have committed any actual sin, shall certainly be saved," is not an act of judgment, but only declaring the virtue and efficacy of baptismal grace and regeneration; that the grace of baptism will save those who do not afterwards forfeit this grace by wilful sins; and, therefore, if the children of Christian parents have a right to baptism, they have a right to the salvation of baptism; and if they die before they have forfeited this right by their own act, they must be saved; and to deny this is to deny the virtue and efficacy of baptism to salvation; and that I am sure is to deny, or to lessen, the gospel grace.

The sum is, God is the judge of the world, and we must leave men to the judgment of God, and judge nothing before the time, nor disturb our thoughts with some curious questions how God will judge the world. We certainly know how we shall be judged, even by the gospel of our Saviour, and therefore ought to take care to prepare our accounts; but how those shall be judged who never heard of the go-

spel we know not, and are not concerned to know; but if we will be judging, we ought to judge very charitably, because, as I observed before, "with what judgment we judge, we shall be judged; and with what measure we mete, it shall be measured unto us again."

But before I dismiss this argument, I cannot but take notice of some great and visible mischiefs of this judging men's final state, whether we damn or save them.

1. As first, for damning, especially when we damn them by wholesale, as the church of Rome damns all heretics, and as others, with as much charity, damn all Papists and malignants, or whoever they are pleased to vote for heretics. Now, what the effect of this is, is visible to all the world; it destroys not only Christian love and charity, but even common humanity. When men have voted one another damned, and believe God will damn those whom they have adjudged to damnation, then they are the enemies of God, and they think they do God good service to destroy them. God hates them, and therefore they think it a sin in them to love those whom God hates, or to have any pity or compassion for those whom God will damn. And thus they burn heretics, or cut their throats, or confiscate their estates, and drive them out from among them, and treat them with all the barbarity and indignities which a damning zeal and fury can invent. All other villanies may meet with some pity and charity, but charity is lukewarmness and want of zeal in God's cause; there is no fire burns so furiously, nor so outrageously consumes, as that which is kindled at God's altar: and thus the Christian church is turned into a great shambles, and stained with the blood of human, nay, of Christian sacrifices; though, were they in the right, that God would damn those men whom they have damned, why should they think patience and forbearance a greater fault in them than it is in God, "who beareth with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction?" Why are they so unmerciful as to hurry away these poor wretches immediately into hell, when God is contented to let them live on; to let the tares and the wheat grow up together till the harvest? Why do they envy them the short and perishing contentments of this life, when they are to suffer an eternity of misery? Methinks it should satisfy the most implacable hatred, to know that they must be miserable for ever, though their miseries should be adjourned for some few years. But if this be the effect of damning men, you may guess that the cause is not very good; though an uncharitable judgment will hurt no body but themselves, yet it is of dangerous consequence when such rash judges will be as hasty executioners too.

2. Though the effects of saving men, and voting them to heaven, be not so tragical as those of damning them, yet this has its mischiefs too.

When any party of men have voted themselves the only true church wherein salvation is to be had, or the only saints and elect people of God, then all who will be saved must herd with them; and most men think it enough to secure their salvation to get into their number. Thus the church of Rome frightens men into her communion, by threatening damnation against all who are out of that church; and this reconciles men to all their superstitions and idolatries for fear of damnation, and encourages them in all manner of looseness and debauchery, when they are got into a church which can save them; and it has much the same effect when men list themselves with any party, where they hope to be saved for company, while all the rest of mankind, even those who profess the faith of Christ, are no better than the world, and the ungodly, and the reprobates, who, though they may have more moral virtues than some others, yet have no grace.

And the mischief of this increases when men are sainted after death. Had it not been for this trick the church of Rome had had very few saints to worship, none but the Virgin Mary, and the Apostles, whom they might certainly conclude to be in heaven; but as for their other saints, who were the great founders and examples of their superstition, they are saints of their own making, just as the Heathens made their gods; and it is the stories and legends of these saints which support the superstition of the church of Rome; for who dares question the examples of those who are canonized saints in heaven? *Hac arte Pol-lux, et vagus Hercules innixus, arces attigit igneas.*

And there are another sort of men who are not behind-hand with them in this, who have a great many more saints than the church of Rome, though they do not pray to them; who send great shoals to heaven, especially if they have been zealous for promoting a party, which hides all other faults, and sanctifies very doubtful actions; and how powerful must the examples of such saints be to excite others to an imitation of their virtues?

In a word, when we pretend to send men to heaven, we make them our rules and examples: we hope to go to heaven with all the faults they had, and those who knew them, possibly knew a great many; and what they were eminent for, we conclude were great virtues, and fit for our imitation, though otherwise of a doubtful and suspicious nature.

There is not a more dangerous thing than to make any man our rule and example, and yet that we necessarily do when we send him to heaven; for who would not think himself late in imitating those whom he believes to be in heaven? and if we consider at what rate both the church of Rome, and others, makes saints, we must needs be sensible how infinitely dangerous this is to men's souls,

To conclude this head: Let us judge charitably of all men, and hope well, according to the different reasons we have to hope; but let us leave their final state to God, neither peremptorily damn or save them. It is to be feared that human judgment has sent many men to heaven who will never get thither; and to be hoped that many men shall meet with a more favourable sentence in the next world than they do in this. God is the Judge of the world, and he will certainly judge us, and there is no inconvenience in staying till the day of judgment, to see what men's final sentence shall be, but very great mischief in pronouncing a rash and hasty judgment ourselves.

S E C T. VIII.

Fourth inference: To refer all difficulties to the day of Judgment.

IV. **I**F God will judge the world, let us refer all difficulties to the day of judgment. It must be confessed that there are very great difficulties in Providence, such as the wisest men cannot understand; and I can by no means say it is a fault for men to search into Providence, and to be very inquisitive into the reasons of it; for what can more become a reasonable creature than to study the works of God? And what works more worth our study than the Divine Providence, and the wonderful mysteries of God's governing the world.

But the difficulty is to set bounds to the curiosity of mankind, to teach them to study Providence with the modesty of creatures, and with the just reverence which we owe to God, whose wisdom is infinite and unsearchable; to be contented to discover what we can, to admire and adore the wisdom, and goodness, and justice, of Providence in what is plain; and there is enough plain to exercise our devout meditations, to be matter of our praise and thanksgivings, and a sure foundation of our trust in God.

And this, wise and good men are contented with; but most men take the least notice of what is plain, as if they were of no use, and not worth notice; but puzzle their thoughts, and lose themselves in those vast depths and abysses which no human understanding can fathom: to correct this miscarriage would do great service to religion, would give great peace and satisfaction to men's minds, and prevent a great many scandalous disputes about the Divine Providence. And, therefore, if I discourse this a little more at large than my present argument requires, I hope it will be no great fault. Now, to set bounds to our curiosity, and to make us modest in our inquiries into Providence, I shall show you,

I. How dangerous it is to search too narrowly into the secrets of Providence.

II. How unreasonable it is to disturb our minds with such difficulties as we cannot answer.

III. That what cannot be known in this world, it is time enough for us to know in the world to come.

IV. That we have all the reason in the world to believe, that what we cannot know in this world, will be made very plain and easy at the day of judgment.

I. As for the first, How dangerous such curious inquiries into Providence are; this is plain in the evil effects of them

1. For first, This either makes men Atheists, or at least is made a pretence to justify Atheism. The natural notion all men have of God is, that he is an infinitely wise, and good, and just, and powerful Being. Now, when men observe such things, either in the make or frame of the world, or in the conduct and government of it, as they cannot reconcile with the notions they have of wisdom, and justice, and goodness, they presently conclude that there is no God; or that he is nothing to them; that he neither made nor governs the world

This is indeed a very rash and hasty conclusion to deny the being of God, because we cannot find out God to perfection; when we must confess that it is impossible for a finite understanding to comprehend all the reasons of an infinite Mind: but thus it must be when men will not be contented to be ignorant of any thing, nor permit God to do what they cannot understand; but will have a reason of every thing God does, or will not allow him to be God. A modest inquirer sees enough in the works of Creation and Providence, to satisfy him that the world was made, and is governed, by a wise Being: but those who think themselves wise enough to make and govern a world a great deal better than this world is made and governed, or are upon other accounts averse to the belief of a God, and have a mind to quarrel with him, take no notice of what is wise and good, and proves God to be infinitely wise and infinitely good, though they cannot open their eyes without seeing a thousand such instances of wisdom and goodness; but employ the little wit they have to find faults, and account every thing they cannot understand a fault. This is such irreverence to God, such presumption and arrogance, and such impiety that they seem to be Atheists first, and then to quarrel with God's works to find out some pretence to deny his Being. It is certain, whoever indulges himself in this, has, in a great measure, lost his reverence for God; and Atheism is a natural consequence and just punishment of that; and such a terrible punishment it is as should make us afraid of being over-curious in matters so far above us.

2. If this does not make us Atheists, yet it is apt to give us very wrong notions concerning God; which is a very great evil, next to Atheism itself.

This we know tempted some men to assert two Principles, or two Gods, a good and a bad God. For when they observed such a mixture of good and evil in the nature of things, they thought it impossible that a good God should be the author of so much evil as is in this world. And because they could not answer this difficulty, nor give an account how a good God should make and govern the world, and yet there be so much evil and wickedness in it, they concluded that there was a bad God, who was the author of all the evil in the world, and a good God of all the good. But this starts a much more unaccountable difficulty, How a good and a bad God should agree together in making and governing the world: for can any thing be more opposite to each other than essential good and essential evil? they can never agree; and therefore they must be either equal in power, or must destroy each other: if they be equal, neither of them are omnipotent; for two omnipotents is a contradiction: and then neither one nor both could make the world, which is a work of omnipotence; at least, since it is impossible they should agree together to make a world; as impossible, as that essential goodness should consent to any thing that is evil, or essential evil consent to any thing that is good; they must necessarily hinder each other in making the world, if their power were equal; and then the world had never been made. But I shall not trouble you with the confutation of this, but only point you to the source and origin of this mischief, which, in its consequence, overthrows all religion.

Others, to ease themselves of these difficulties of reconciling all the passages of Providence to God's wisdom and justice, set them both aside, and resolve all into God's arbitrary and sovereign will and pleasure; who makes himself, and the advancement of his own glory, his sole end. They lay it down, indeed, as an agreed principle, that all that God does is wise, and good, and just; but we must not examine this by human rules and measures of goodness and justice: for God is an absolute sovereign, and unaccountable to his creatures; his will is the rule of justice, and he wills what is most for his own glory; he magnifies his goodness and grace in a free and arbitrary kindness to some of his creatures; and magnifies his justice in as free and arbitrary severities to others: he makes some creatures to be objects of his love, and others to be the objects of his vengeance and displeasure; and thus they cut the knot which they cannot untie.

But this is a greater difficulty than all the rest to a considering man, who would much rather chuse to give no account of the divine Providence than to give so ill an account of the nature of God. **Arbi-**

trary will and power is the very worst notion we can have of God : it destroys our love to him, and our hope and confidence in him, unless we can fancy him as partial to us as we are to ourselves ; it turns religion into a superstitious dread of God, or hypocritical flatteries ; destroys the notions of good or evil, or all regard to them, while we think God takes no notice of them himself.

This may satisfy us how dangerous it is to be too inquisitive into the mysteries of Providence, which God has thought fit to conceal from us ; which should make us careful to keep our distance, and humbly to reverence and adore God, and trust his wisdom beyond our own understanding of things. And, in order to cure this curiosity, consider,

II. How unreasonable it is to disturb our minds with such difficulties of Providence as we cannot answer, or to draw any such conclusion from them as shall either shake our faith as to the being or providence of God, or corrupt our notions of him. And there are two things which may satisfy any man in this :

1st, That there are a great many things which are called difficulties, which may be very fairly accounted for ; and therefore the difficulty is not in the things, but owing to our want of understanding : which is reason enough to presume that thus it may be in other cases too ; since, as men's knowledge increases, so the difficulties of Providence lessen. Which should make us never quarrel at Providence, but bewail our own ignorance, and grow modest under a sense of it.

2^{dly}, That in such matters as we can give no account of, there may be plain reasons assigned why no account may be given of them in this world.

1. As for the first, It is easy to give many instances of it : there are many things which mankind greatly complain of, and for which they think themselves very hardly used by God, which, upon a true estimate of things, considering the corrupt state of human nature, are greatly for the happiness of the world ; and though they were inflicted as punishments by God, yet have an excellent temperament of wisdom and goodness.

This I have formerly showed you, as to that sentence of death which God pronounced against mankind after the fall of our first parents, "Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return ;" and as to his shortening the lives of men after the flood : and I shall now give another instance in that curse God pronounced upon the earth for the sin of man, to which we owe most of that pain, and toil, and labour, which is under the sun, and most of the miseries and calamities of human life : and if in this also the wisdom and goodness as well as the justice and severity of God appears, I hope it will convince us how reason-

able it is to be modest in our censures of Providence, and to conclude, that God is equally wise and good in those things which we do not understand.

The justice of this is very evident; for when man, who was the lord of the creation, had rebelled against God, it was very just for God to punish him; and the most proper punishment which he could inflict on him, next to his own mortality, was to curse those creatures which were made for his use and delight: as God told Adam, when he had eaten the forbidden fruit, "Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee, saying, 'Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread, until thou return to the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return;'" *Gen. iii. 17.* For I need not tell you this curse upon the ground was no punishment to the ground, which was sensible of no hurt, but to man, who was to live upon it: it defaced the beauty and glory of the creation, and entailed a toilsome and painful life on him; it made his food less wholesome, and more hard to come by. And whereas all creatures, before, were in perfect subjection to man, according to the grand charter of the creation, "Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth on the earth," *Gen. i. 28.* now we find by experience that they have cast off this yoke, and very often revenge the quarrel of their Maker upon apostate man. Thus man fell from the glory and happiness of his nature; and yet, if we wisely consider things, we shall find excellent wisdom and goodness even in this curse.

For man, having corrupted himself, the best state he could be put into was an industrious and laborious life, to force him to work hard to get his living, and to earn his bread by the sweat of his brows, which was the necessary and immediate effect of God's cursing the ground; that whereas before, the earth would have supplied man with all things for his necessity and delight without his care and labour, now it would not yield its increase of its self, but brought forth briers and thorns: and as difficult a state as this is, it was very fit for fallen man.

1. A laborious life is of great use to subdue the fleshly principle, and to prevent the opportunities, and occasions, and temptations to sin: the experience of the world tells us, that nothing more corrupts men's manners than idleness, the flesh grows rampant with sloth and luxury; and time itself is so uneasy and troublesome when we have

nothing to do, that men rather chuse to be wicked than to be idle; and therefore God, who foresaw the degeneracy of mankind by the fall, hath provided work for us, that with the sweat of our brow we must eat our bread.

2. This does not only employ the bodies but the minds of men; puts them upon the study of philosophy, and the invention of arts and sciences, upon observing the works of Nature, and dependence of causes and effects; to observe the motions of the heaven, the sun, and moon, and planets, thereby to know the seasons of the year, and to fix the time of their return; it is this necessity to which we owe the most useful discoveries in nature, which is not only very beneficial to the world, but a very delightful entertainment, and the most natural ornament and perfection of our minds.

3. The necessities of human life are the foundation of human societies, and make men combine together for mutual help and comfort; for though man is a sociable creature, and delighted with human conversation, yet in this degenerate state nothing is a greater endearment than our mutual dependence upon each other, that we cannot live single and apart, because we want a great many things which the skill and labour of other men must supply us with.

Now, this obliges us to the exercise of all friendly and sociable virtues, brings us under government, without which human societies cannot subsist; and this lays great restraint upon the lusts of men, and, by a strict discipline, trains them up to the practice of moral virtues, which is a good means to correct the degeneracy of human nature; it inspires us with principles of love and humanity, of justice and charity, and softens and polishes our natures by the mutual endearments of conversation; it makes us friends to mankind, gives us a sense of injuries, and an abhorrence of them; and, which is more than this, it gives public countenance and encouragement to religion: for public government must encourage religion, because religion is its greatest defence and support. And this makes some men sincerely religious and devout, and forces some external signs of honour from those who have little sense or reverence of a Deity, which, though it does no good to them, is for the advantage of the world.

So that this curse, in the necessary consequences of it, is the greatest blessing to mankind; which is an abundant justification of the wisdom and goodness of God in it: a more easy state of life did better become a state of innocence; but since the fall, such an easy, careless, unconcerned life, would have sunk man lower into sensuality, and made his recovery more desperate and hopeless.

It were easy to give many instances of this nature to justify the divine Wisdom and Goodness, in such passages of providence as seem very

harsh and severe to us; but this may suffice, at present, to make us modest in our censures of Providence, and not to perplex our minds with such difficulties as we cannot unriddle.

2. Especially if we add, that there is a plain and evident reason why we cannot and never shall be able to understand a great many difficulties of Providence in this world; and, therefore, ought not to censure the Divine Providence, because we cannot in all cases comprehend the reason of it. As for instance:

We are very ignorant of men, and therefore can never be able to give an account of God's providence towards them. We can, in general, justify the Divine Providence, both as to the afflictions and sufferings of good men, and the prosperity of the wicked; but when we descend to particulars, we are at a loss why such a good man is a great sufferer, and another good man prosperous; why such a bad man reaps the just rewards of his villainies in this world, while another man, equally bad, escapes and prospers by his wickedness. We cannot know this, because we do not sufficiently know men: we may mistake those for good men who are secret hypocrites, and carry on wicked designs under a mask of religion; and then, when we complain that such a good man suffers, God may be very just in punishing an hypocrite. We know not what the secret distempers of good men are, which may require a severe remedy; nor what good there may be even in bad men, which may make their recovery hopeful, and make it reasonable for God to spare.

Thus, we know not how particular men's interests are interwoven with each other, or with the public, which may make it reasonable for God to spare or to punish them upon more accounts than their own; for good men may suffer in the sufferings of the wicked, and be blessed in their prosperity: the sufferings of good men, and the prosperity of the wicked, may be of public use to the world, and it is very just and reasonable in the wise Governor of the world to make the interests of private men subordinate to a public good: but when this is necessary we know not, and, therefore, are very incompetent judges of the Divine providence; nay, we see but a very little part of God's providence towards particular men, but a scene or two of their lives, or it may be but a little piece of a scene; and, therefore, it is impossible we should make a true judgment of God's providence towards them, the beauty of which consists in the proportion of parts, and adapting every thing to the end it serves. The history of Joseph, taken altogether, is a demonstration of God's tender care of him, though there were some doleful scenes of his life; the hard usage he met with from his brethren, who sold him for a slave into Egypt, and from a wicked mistress there, whose false accusations condemned him to a gaol, from

whence God raised him to Pharaoh's throne. There are very few men can make any objection against the Divine Providence with respect to themselves, because they know themselves, and the several stages of their lives, what good and evil they have done, and what they have deserved, and what they have received from God; which is a good argument that we should find as little to except against the providence of God to other men also, did we know them as perfectly as we know ourselves.

III. As for what cannot be known in this world, it is time enough for us to know it in the world to come.

Indeed this knowledge is not fit for us in this world; it is not fit we should know one another so perfectly as is necessary to vindicate every passage of God's providence towards other men: for this would be to have a casement into each others breasts, to understand all the intrigues and secrets of families; and were it put to our own choice, I am apt to think we should rather be contented to be ignorant of a great, many things, than to be so well known ourselves to all the world.

Now, is it fitting in this state, that we should so perfectly understand all the secrets of the divine counsel; for what reason he afflicts or prospers private men, or public societies, as is necessary to make a judgment of the Divine Providence? One great mystery of government is to conceal counsels; and this is the glory of the Divine Providence, by dark and mysterious methods, to bring about glorious designs, to surprize the world with unexpected blessings, or unseen evils, to keep them in constant awe and dependence on himself.

And then, of what use is it to us to be able to give a reason of every particular passage of Providence? We have nothing to do to sit in judgment upon God; and therefore, if we know enough to be a steady foundation of our faith and hope, we know all that is needful in this life. God does not intend to gratify our curiosity, or our scepticism: we must not perfectly know God in this world; for we must live by faith here, which supposes an imperfect knowledge; but perfect sight and knowledge is the reward and happiness of heaven.

It is the last act which explains the whole plot; the rest is amusement and surprise. And therefore, the proper time to understand the whole mystery of Providence is when all is finished: when God puts an end to this world, he will think fit to display that infinite variety of wisdom and goodness which governed the world from the beginning to the end.

IV. And this we may expect to understand at the day of judgment; for I know no other reason why God should in so solemn a manner judge the world, but to justify the wisdom, and justice, and goodness of his providence to all his creatures.

God does not thus publicly judge the world, to inquire into men's lives, and actions, and deserts; which is the reason of human judgments, to convince sinners by witnesses and evidences, and to inform the judge in matters of fact; but God perfectly knows us all; and every man's conscience is a witness against himself, that God might, without any farther solemnity, adjudge every man to his proper place and reward: but he consults his own glory in this, and summons all his creatures together, that men and angels may understand, and be witnesses of his mercy and justice.

Now, it is impossible God should justify his providence without expounding the reasons of it; and therefore then we may expect to understand the case of the fallen angels, which now we know nothing of; and all the passages and various scenes of Providence, from the fall of Adam till the end of the world. Then the state of nations, of kingdoms, of churches, and of private men, will be explained; the secrets of hearts will be disclosed, and the hidden works of darkness brought to light.

Let us then stay till this day comes, when God will justify his providence against all the reproaches and evil surmises of men; for he "will appear just when he judgeth, and overcome when he contendeth." Let us not disturb our heads with such difficulties as we cannot understand now; we know enough to believe that God "is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works; enough to make us devout worshippers of God; and to inquire farther is a dangerous curiosity, like looking into the ark of God.

S E C T. IX.

Fifth inference: To affect our souls with a strong, and vigorous, and constant sense of Judgment.

V. SINCE it is certain that God will judge the world, let us endeavour, by all means possible, to affect our souls with a strong, and vigorous, and constant sense of judgment: the belief of a future judgment is worth little when it ends in speculation: the use of it is to govern our lives, and to prepare us to give a good account of ourselves to God, since we know that he will demand an account of us. But a mere belief that we shall be judged will not do this, unless we affect our souls with a sense of judgment. The experience of the world, and our own experience of ourselves, does sufficiently prove this: we all profess to believe a future judgment, and most of us do heartily believe it; and yet there are too many among us who give little reason to the world to think they believe it; who commit those sins every

day, for which they know God will damn them when they come to judgment; which one would think those who believe they shall be judged could never do. So that a mere belief of a future judgment cannot govern men's lives; but then these very men, when they are awakened into a dread and fear of judgment, feel the virtue and power of it on their hearts; it makes them hate their sins, and hate themselves for them; it makes them very devout and importunate in their prayers, very sincere and passionate in their repentance, very resolved to forsake all their sins, and to live a new live. And therefore, if we would have the belief of a future judgment make us good men, we must not only believe it, but affect our souls with a great sense of it. Which is true of all the other arguments and motives of religion, as well as of a future judgment.

The proper inquiry then here is, how we shall awaken and preserve such a powerful sense of judgment in our minds?

Now, the only general direction that can be given is, frequently to think and meditate on a future judgment; for nothing can affect our minds but our thoughts, which make the object present, and give us a near view of it. As it is in the objects of sense; the eye affects the heart, and excites and moves the affections more than all the arguments in the world: if we look stedfastly upon a terrible and frightful object, it will strike terror into us; if upon a pleasant and beautiful object, it will excite love and delight; if upon a miserable object, it will affect us with a tender compassion; to see men in great want and misery will melt and open that heart which was hardened and shut against all the arguments and motives to charity. And long and frequent consideration will have much the same effect on us that sight has. Judgment is a terrible thing to bad men; and if they would but seriously think of it, it would terrify them; if they would but imagine sometimes, "that they heard that last trumpet sound, which will awaken all mankind, and raise them out of their graves, and summon them to judgment; that they saw the Son of man descend from heaven, attended with his mighty angels, to execute vengeance on them who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; that they saw the earth all in flames about them, and hell open her mouth wide to receive them; that they saw the books opened, and those sins recorded which they had forgot, and the secrets of their hearts disclosed; and that they heard that terrible sentence, Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:" do you think that any man who believes all this, and would suffer himself seriously to think of it, could bear up against the terrors of it? or that, with these thoughts about him, he could court a strumpet, or spend his time in revels and excess, or blaspheme

God, and ridicule religion, or cheat his neighbour, or oppress the poor and fatherless, or forswear himself? No: we see this cannot be, as often as we see a miserable sinner, whose awakened conscience distracts him with all these scenes and images of terror.

So that serious consideration would make a future judgment very effectual to govern our lives: but the great difficulty of all is, to bring men to consider; and yet one would think it impossible that a reasonable creature should not consider that he must be judged: but so it is; and there is no disputing against experience; and yet this is so dangerous and fatal a neglect, that it concerns us to inquire into the causes and remedies of it; for could we cure this, it would quickly reform the world, give a new resurrection to piety and virtue, and secure men from the dangers and terrors of a future judgment. Now, there are two apparent causes of this: 1. That the thoughts of judgment are very uneasy and troublesome, and that makes men afraid and averse to think of it. And, 2. That judgment is out of sight, and they have nothing to mind them of it; and their thoughts are so taken up with other matters that they forget it, unless they happen to hear a sermon about it, or some accidental mention of it; which, when they return to their worldly affairs and business, they quite forget again.

1st, Men are very apt to avoid all thoughts of judgment, because they are very troublesome; they startle at the mention of it; at least do not love to talk too long, nor think too seriously of it: for it awakens their consciences, and makes them think what a sad account they have to give; how many things they have done, and daily do, which they can never answer to God, when he comes to judgment; and therefore they chuse to live quietly, without disturbing themselves with such terrifying reflections, and amazing thoughts of what is to come. Now, methinks it is no hard thing to convince thinking men of the danger and folly of this, and to reconcile them to the thoughts of judgment. For,

1. To drive these thoughts out of our minds, though it may give us present ease, yet it will not mend our accounts, nor prevent our being judged; God will judge us, whether we will think of being judged or not. Were no men to be judged but those who think of it, there were as much reason to stupify our consciences, and never to think of judgment, as there is for sick men to take opiates to sleep away their pain and their distemper together; but this would be thought a very ill remedy for their present pain were they to sleep away their lives. And yet this is the remedy these men chuse, to sleep away their souls, to sleep away the fears of judgment, till judgment awaken them and their fears, never to sleep more.

2. How frightful soever the thoughts of judgment are, it will be infinitely more terrible to see and feel it; and there is no way to avoid

that terrible condemnation, but by thinking of it: the fear of judgment, if once it thoroughly possesses our souls, will conquer this world, disarm all its terrors, discover its cheats and impostures, wash off its paint and varnish, pluck off its vizard and disguise; it will teach us to fear God, which is the beginning of wisdom, the guide of youth, and the counsellor of age. And would not any wise man rather chuse to preserve himself from danger and misery, by fearing it, than to live without fear, and to perish by his security? In this world men love to know and see their danger, that they may avoid it, how dismal soever the prospect be: and it is very unaccountable, that men should chuse rather to be damned, than to prevent it by a timely foresight, and a prudent fear and caution.

For, 3. That fear of judgment, which is necessary to govern our lives, and to prevent our final condemnation, is not so amazing and terrifying as these men apprehend it. It is not the fear of a man who is going to execution, but the fear of prudence, caution, and foresight, which makes men wise and circumspect, but do not distract them. We have as many demonstrations of this as there are men who govern their lives under the fear and sense of a future judgment. Are there any men in the world who live more cheerfully than they, who converse more pleasantly with their friends, and enjoy the comforts of life with greater innocence and freedom? Do you find any disturbance in their looks, any symptoms of an uneasy and frightened imagination? And yet these men all this while live under the constant awe and fear of judgment: and therefore the sense and fear of judgment is consistent with a constant peace and serenity of mind.

That which distracts and terrifies men is not the constant awe and sense of judgment, but the condemnation of their own guilty consciences, which threaten the judgments of God against them. And when men apprehend themselves a falling into hell, and fear their case is hopeless and irrecoverable, it is no wonder if the very pains of hell take hold of them; and not being able to bear these horrors, they silence or stupify their consciences with the noise, and business, and diversions, and pleasures, of this life, and can never endure to entertain the least thought of judgment, and imagine that all who do live a miserable life, are as melancholy and disturbed as they are when they think of judgment: but this is a great mistake; it is their guilt which makes the thoughts of judgment so terrible, and their not thinking of judgment betrays them to that guilt: and nothing but a constant sense of judgment can now expiate their guilt, and conquer their fears, by repentance and a new life. And as terrible as this is for the present, it is more desirable than to be damned. But would men accustom themselves betimes to the thoughts of judgment, and govern their lives

under the sense of it, judgment would never be terrible to them, no more than the assize is to men who have an awe and reverence for the justice of their country, and obey its laws.

Nay, 4. When we govern our lives under the awe of a future judgment, it is so far from being terrible, that it fills us with great and joyful hopes. For when God judges the world, he will reward good men as well as punish the wicked. And if the fear of a future judgment makes us truly and sincerely good, we shall long for the day of judgment, as the husbandman does for the harvest: this will be our great support and comfort under all the calamities of life, and be a perpetual spring of the most sincere and divine joys.

This may satisfy us that there is no reason to be afraid to think of judgment; that to live under the constant sense of it, as it is the only way to make us truly good men, so it will deliver us from all guilty fears, support us under all present troubles, and delight us with the hope and expectation of glorious rewards.

2dly, As for those who, out of mere carelessness and inconsideration, never think seriously about a future judgment, who employ all their thoughts about present and sensible objects, but do not concern themselves about what is absent and unseen, or think very seldom, and very coldly and transiently of it; it is a wonder to me, how men need be put in mind of a matter of such vast concernment and importance to them as a future judgment is. Does not the happiness of your immortal souls depend on it? Is it possible to conquer the temptations of this world, to resist the solicitations of the flesh, the courtship of riches and honour, those gilded vanities of this life, without remembering that for all these things God will call us to judgment? Methinks men should as soon venture themselves in a rocky and tempestuous sea, without rudder or pilot, or compass, or ballast, or anchor, as to think to pass safe through this world without a constant awe and sense of a future judgment. Such men are very careless of their souls, and they must lose them, for they will never get safe to heaven: they can never give a good account to God when he comes to judgment who never think of any account they are to make.

But, besides this: as one would think that a future judgment is of that great moment, that no man, who is at all concerned for his future happiness, could suffer it to go out of his mind; so there is little reason in this case to complain of want of monitors. For though we do not see the judgment-seat, and all the awful solemnities of judgment, (and it is impossible we should, for it is not yet), yet there are a thousand things to put us in mind of it. And if it be possible to forget a matter of such consequence, without something to refresh our memories, and to renew the impression of it, I shall briefly hint to you

some things which occur every day, and are very familiar emblems of judgment, and desire you to unite the thoughts of a future judgment to them, that when you see the one, you may think of the other; which will be a kind of artificial memory when you find the notes and characters of judgment so frequently presented to you. As to give you three or four familiar instances of this, which you may very easily multiply.

When you are so busy and careful in keeping your books, and casting up your accounts, and balancing your gain and your loss, and observing how your stock increases or decays, can you forbear thinking that you have a greater and more concerning account than this; the account of your life and actions? which, if you do not keep, God does: he has his records of them, and will produce his books at the day of judgment, and judge you out of them.

When you call your servants or stewards to an account how they have improved or embezzled your goods; whether they have hid their talent in a napkin, or traded with it and gained five or ten talents, you should remember that you also are but God's stewards, and must give an account of your stewardship; and either shall be stewards no longer, but be turned out of your master's service, and be punished for your negligence, or shall receive a reward proportionable to your diligence and gain.

When we correct our children or servants for their idleness, disobedience, or any other miscarriage, or reward their diligence and virtue, can we forget that we have a father and a master in heaven, who curiously observes all our actions, and will judge, will reward and punish, us according to our works?

When we see at harvest the wheat gathered into the barn, and the weeds neglected or burnt, should it not mind us what a difference God will make between good and bad men at the day of judgment? That though they live intermixed in this world, they shall be parted then; good men received into heaven, where God dwells, and bad men banished into utter darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth for evermore.

The awful solemnities of human judicatures, the judge sitting on the bench, the malefactor arraigned at the bar, the jury, the witnesses, the trial, condemnation, sentence, execution, are lively emblems of a future judgment; and methinks should mind judge and juries, and witnesses, and spectators, of it.

I have mentioned these few instances, because they are common and familiar, and scripture-representations of a future judgment; and so often occur, that if we would but as often think seriously of a future judgment, we should soon attain an habitual sense of it. And possibly my applying them to this purpose now, (as little an observation as it

may seem), may make you think of your great account, when you are casting up your books, or reckoning with your workmen, or taking an account of your stewards and servants: and if it should, I shall have my end, and you will find the benefit of it.

But there is one thing which is naturally apt to mind us of a future judgment, and I am sure always ought to do so, and is of very near and present concernment to us at this time; and that is, "when the judgments of God are in the earth;" for then, as the Prophet Isaiah tells us, "the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness," *Ija. xxvi. 9.*

I have already observed to you, that the examples of a just and righteous Providence which governs this world are a good proof of a future judgment: for it is an argument that God does take notice of the actions of men, and concerns himself in the government of the world; and then we have no reason to question whether he will judge the world. And when God is actually executing judgments on the world, when he is judging kingdoms and nations, when he has unsheathed the sword, and made it drunk with blood, when the desolations of flourishing countries, the burning of towns and cities, the lamentable slaughter of infinite numbers of people, do so loudly proclaim the wrath and displeasure of God, those who have not a great and awful and terrible sense of judgment, will never be awakened but by the sounding of the last trumpet.

It is this that makes the judgments of God so effectual to reform the world; not merely the fears of present sufferings, of those temporal evils and calamities, wherewith God punishes sinners, but that by these visible tokens of God's anger, by the present sensible effects of his justice and power, men are roused and alarmed into a consideration of future vengeance.

We extremely weaken the argument from present and sensible judgments, when we urge it no farther than to persuade men to reform their lives to remove those judgments which are upon them: this is an additional argument to reform our sins to save our country from ruin; but those who will not reform their sins to save their souls will never part with them to save a nation. And therefore, the true force of the argument resolves itself into a future judgment. God has begun to punish us already in this world for our sins, and unless we repent, we must not hope to escape so: these temporal sufferings are but a summons to judgment; and, it may be, are intended to remove us presently into the other world to receive our reward. The axe is now visibly laid to the root of the tree, and every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

And the visible execution of God's judgments upon the world will

certainly mind us of a future judgment, and give us a feeling sense of it; as it gives us a present and sensible view of God's justice and power, and a near prospect of it.

1. It gives us a present and sensible view of God's justice and power; and that though he be very good and merciful, he is very righteous too, and very severe in his judgments; that though he "be gracious" and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness," yet he will not always spare, but "will awake to visit the Heathen, and will not be "merciful to any wicked transgressors," *Psal. lix. 5.*

When we see what desolations God makes in the earth, how his judgments, like a sudden and mighty torrent, overflow a secure and happy country, sweep away the inhabitants of it, or transplant them into foreign nations to beg their bread among strangers; when we see how he sounds an alarm to war, and sets kingdom against kingdom, and every man's sword against his brother: when we observe with what an impartial hand he strikes, that there is no country, no people, no religion escapes: that he makes ambition and covetousness correct superstition, and superstition chastise the coldness and formality, the loose and licentious lives, of more orthodox Christians; I say, when we see such things as these in the world, shall we not fear and tremble before that just and righteous Judge? Can we forget that God will judge the world in righteousness, when we see already such terrible executions, which are only preludiums to a final judgment?

2. These present and visible judgments give us a nearer prospect of a future judgment; and judgment will more sensibly affect us the nearer we see it. Not that such judgments as these prove that the final judgment is near at hand; for the records and histories of former ages give us an account of very terrible judgments which God then executed upon the world; and yet we see the final judgment is deferred, and we know not how long it may be deferred still. But though the general judgment may be a great way off, yet our particular judgment may be very near: God may quickly cut us off, and put an end to our account: and when the judgments of God are in the world, we have reason to expect it, at least so far as to be prepared for it. *Proximus ardet Ucalegon*: when we see the judgments of God sweep away so many thousands round about us, who not long since lived as secure and unconcerned for danger as we do; when we see the clouds hover and rowl about the heavens, charged with thunder and tempest, who knows where the storm will break next, and who shall feel the violence of it? And therefore the judgments of God, which are in the earth, will give all considering men such a present sense of a future judgment as a threatening sickness will do. Present judgments may suddenly cut us off, and send us into the other world unprepared for a final judgment,

and there is no preparing for it there, and then these present judgments may prove final to us. So that those who live in such an age as this will be utterly inexcusable if they forget their account, which they have such terrible admonitions of. Let us make this use of present judgments to awaken a more lively and vigorous sense of a future judgment in us, and that will make us good men, and secure our eternal happiness, and is the best way to prevent any public calamities of our country which we may fear, or to preserve ourselves from being involved in them.

C H A P. II.

Concerning the time of Judgment.

S E C T. I.

Concerning a particular Judgment at the time of every man's death.

LET us now consider the time of judgment; "God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness." Now, this plainly refers to that general judgment, when all mankind shall be summoned before the tribunal of Christ, to be judged according to their works. But before I speak to this, it will be necessary to take notice of what we commonly call a particular judgment; which is supposed to pass upon all men, as soon as they go out of these bodies.

The received opinion is, that when any man dies he is immediately called to judgment, and receives his final sentence, which is immediately executed on him; that a bad man is sentenced to hell, and sent immediately thither; that a good man is received into heaven, and enjoys the beatific vision from the time of his going out of this body.

But I must confess this has always appeared a great difficulty to me. We live in such an inquisitive age, as will not allow us to affirm what we cannot prove; and indeed no honest man ought to do so, for it forfeits any man's authority, and weakens the credit of religion, when that which has no proof, or at best is very uncertain, is taught with as great assurance as that which is most certain and unquestionable in religion; and yet no wise man will oppose and contradict a received doctrine, though he were satisfied it were a mistake, when there are no ill consequences attend it: for my part, I must honestly profess that I neither dare affirm nor deny this particular judgment, in the sense in which it is commonly understood; for there are some passages in Scripture which seem to look both ways; and since I cannot decently avoid

saying something of it, I shall fairly represent to you what intimations there are in Scripture about this matter; for there is no other way of knowing this, and I dare teach no more than what the Scripture teaches.

1. Now, in the first place, thus much is very plain in the Scripture, that good men, when they die, are translated into a place of ease, and rest, and happiness, and bad men to a place of misery and punishment; which I suppose is what men mean by a particular judgment; for this is a kind of judgment, though it be not performed with all the pompous solemnities of judgment, to allot men their different states of life, according as they have behaved themselves in this world.

The parable of Dives and Lazarus is very express to this purpose, *Luke xvi. 19, &c.* "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores.—And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died and was buried. And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." That this relates to the state of good and bad men immediately after death is very evident, especially from that request which the rich man made to Abraham, to send Lazarus to his father's house: "For," saith he, "I have five brethren, that he may testify to them, lest they also come into this place of torment:" which shows that Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom, and Dives tormented in hell, or *hades*, while his brethren were living and revelling on earth; and therefore this cannot relate to a general judgment, but signifies that state they entered into as soon as they died: and though what is generally said, that we must not argue from parables, is very true as to particular circumstances of the story, which are the ornaments and embellishments of parables, yet it is as true that we must argue from the principal scope and design of them; and then we may certainly conclude from this parable, that good and bad men, as soon as they die, are in a state of happiness and misery, otherwise there is no foundation for this parable: for why should one be sent from the dead to inform the living what punishments bad men suffer in the next world, if they suffer nothing till the day of judgment, which is not yet? For in this case such a messenger could not be an eye-witness of the punishment of sinners, which is the only thing that is supposed to give such authority to his testimony.

1. I do not remember any other such express text for the immediate punishment of sinners as soon as they go out of these bodies; and one such text as this is enough; but there are many texts to prove that good men, when they die, go immediately into a state of happiness:

not only Lazarus was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, but Christ promised the thief upon the cross, that that day he should be with him in Paradise; and St. Paul tells us, that "to be at home in the body, is to be absent from the Lord;" but when they "are absent from the body, they shall be present with the Lord:" that is, when they die, when they go out of these bodies, they shall go to Christ, *2 Cor. v. 6, 8.* and this made it so difficult a choice to St. Paul, whether he should desire to live or die; by living he might do great service to the church, and therefore he was very well contented to live; but if he departed, he should be with Christ, which is best of all: "For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better: nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you," *Phil. i. 23, 24.* And it is universally pronounced, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them," *Rev. xiv. 13.* This evidently proves, that good men shall be happy as soon as they die; and besides the express authority of our Saviour in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, the reason of the thing proves that bad men must be miserable; that as the happiness of good men commences with their death, so must the miseries of the wicked.

Bad men, indeed, many times live very happily in this world, for this is the time of God's patience, while he waits to be gracious, "not being willing any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." But the day of grace ends with this life; the next world is for retributions; we must there receive according to our works: and therefore, though we should suppose that the perfect rewards of good men, and the perfect miseries of the wicked, should be deferred till the day of judgment, when the final sentence shall be pronounced; which shall bestow heaven upon good men, and condemn the wicked to hell; yet the punishment of bad men must begin when they leave this world, because God's patience is then at an end; and the rewards of good men must begin too, because their work and labour is at an end. And this has been the universal belief of mankind, who have believed a future state; though they knew nothing of a general judgment, when all mankind should be summoned before God's tribunal, yet they all believed, that when bad men died they immediately went to a place of punishment, and good men to Elysium, a place of rest and happiness: for if we shall be rewarded and punished in the next world for what we have done in this, it is natural and reasonable to think that our rewards and punishments shall begin as soon as we go into the next world.

2. And yet we read of no other formal judgment, but that great

and general judgment, when the Son of man shall descend from heaven with a glorious retinue of angels to judge the world: if we examine all those express declarations of Christ and his apostles concerning judgment, or those parables of our Saviour which relate to it, we shall plainly find, that they concern the last and general judgment: it is "in that day," which relates to a certain determined day of judgment, that "many shall say unto him, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" *Mat. vii. 22.*; it is at the end of the world, when the angels shall separate between the wheat and the tares, between the good and bad fish which were taken in the same net, *Mat. xiii.*; it is "when the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, that he shall reward every man according to his works," *Mat. xvi. 27.*; that is, as St. Paul speaks, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," *2 Thess. viii. 9.* "God has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man:" and when he must do this, he tells us, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation," *John v. 27, 28, 29.* And in his account of his judging the world he tells us, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats," *Mat. xxv. 31, 32.* Then it is, when the man who travelled into a far country returns, and calls his servants to an account, how they have improved their talents, *ver. 14, &c.*

Christ is the only Judge of the world, for all judgment is committed to the Son; and he does not judge the world till his second appearance, till he returns in the glory of his Father, with his angels. The Apostle to the Hebrews indeed tells us, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment;" which might seem to intimate a particular judgment of all men as soon as they die; but he adds when this judgment shall be, in the next verse, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;" he died once for us, because we must once die: "and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation;" that is, he shall appear the second time to judge the world; which shows, that this judgment after death is not the general judgment, *Heb. ix. 27, 28.*

And the truth is, if all men have a final sentence passed on them as soon as they go into the other world, it is very unaccountable why

Christ, at the last day, shall come with such a terrible pomp and solemnity to judge and condemn those who are judged, and condemned, and executed already, as much as ever they can be.

And therefore, in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, we have no mention of their being judged; but Lazarus was carried by an angel into Abraham's bosom; the angels being "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation," *Heb. i. 14*. Thus they minister to good men in this world, and do a great many kind offices for us which we know not of; and thus they minister to us when we go out of this world; and conduct us to a place of ease and rest; carry us safe through the crowds of evil spirits which fill these lower regions "into Abraham's bosom:" but the "rich man" was dead and buried, and lift up his eyes in hell, or *hades*, (not *Gehenna*) which signifies the state of separate souls, and it seems of wicked souls, and was in torment; but how he came thither it is not said: there is no notice given us of any judgment which sat on him, or who carried him thither; and therefore, if we may guess by the analogy of the parable, as Lazarus was carried by an angel into Abraham's bosom, so Dives, having no good angel to guard him, fell into the hands of wicked spirits; for the devil is the prince of the power of the air, the great tempter of men while they live, and their tormentor when they die. Whoever is so far rejected by God as to be delivered up to the power of wicked spirits, without any restraint in their malice and cruelty, as wicked men are when they die, need no other punishment till the day of judgment, when they, together with the devil and his angels, shall be cast into utter darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, for evermore. We know what cruel tyranny the devil exercised upon the Pagan world, who so devoutly worshipped him; and what then must the case be of those wretched souls, who are delivered to him by God as their jailer and tormentor till the day of judgment? I will not say this is the case, though it seems no improbable account of it; but if it be, (and thus it may be, before Christ comes to judge the world), you must all confess, that to have the devil for our tormentor is the very next degree to being tormented with the devil and his angels.

But yet this is not a final judgment, the last sentence is not pronounced against them; and though I doubt not but most bad men as certainly know what their doom will be as the devils themselves do, yet there is reason to think that some bad men (as bad men, we see, are very apt to flatter themselves with vain hopes in this world, and may do so in the next, for aught we know) are still in hopes of finding mercy at the day of judgment, when Christ comes to judge the world: for if they knew themselves under a final and irreversible sentence,

there can be no account given why, at the last day, they should put in any plea for themselves, or sue for mercy; and yet thus our Saviour represents it: "In that day many shall say unto me, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity." *Matth. vii. 22, 23.*

And thus, in the description of the last judgment, when he shall say to them on the left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungry, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they answer him, Lord, when saw we thee an hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" *Matth. xxv. 41,—44.* Now, it is not imaginable that these men, at the day of judgment, should make any of these pleas, had they been judged, and condemned, and the final sentence passed on them before.

The sum is this; That mankind shall not be finally judged till Christ comes to judge the world; but yet good men are in a state of happiness, and bad men in a state of punishment and misery. That very good men, as they are happy at present, so they have the joyful expectations of the day of judgment, when they shall be finally rewarded, and received into the immediate presence of God in heaven; and that very bad men, besides the miseries which they at present suffer, have the terrible prospect of a future judgment, when they know they shall be condemned to endless miseries.

3. There is this farther to be added, that, according to that account the Scripture gives us of this matter, though bad men shall be miserable, and good men happy, as soon as they go out of these bodies, yet bad men shall not be condemned to hell, nor good men received into heaven, till the day of judgment. There is no great difficulty in proving this, since the rewards of good men, and the punishments of the wicked, that is, their final rewards and punishments, or heaven and hell, are, throughout the New Testament, referred to the day of judgment. This our Saviour expressly tells us, *Matth. xiii. 41, 42, 43.* "The Son of man shall send forth his angels," that is, at the end of the world, *ver. 39.* "and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which work iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father." But there is no need of any

other proof of this but that, at the day of judgment, good men shall be received into heaven, and bad men condemned to hell, *Matth.* xxv. And if good men were in heaven before, it is very strange that they should be brought out of heaven to be judged, and to be received into heaven again with greater authority and solemnity; and if bad men were in hell before, it seems as strange that they should be fetched out of hell, to be more solemnly condemned thither again: this would be thought a very odd kind of proceeding among men; and we have no reason to suspect this of God's judgment.

As for bad men, they are to be cast into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels: and therefore it is not likely they should be cast into this fire before the devil himself is; and yet the Scripture assures us, that at present he is "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," *Ephes.* ii. 2. And St. Peter tells us, that God "spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down into hell, and delivered them into the chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment," *2 Pet.* ii. 4.; which is very ill translated; for if they were cast down into hell, how are they reserved for the day of judgment? for what worse judgment can they undergo than to be cast into hell? But the words are *αἰμαῖς ἰσχυρὰ ταραπύσσας*, casting them down into chains of darkness, for so *ταραπύσσειν* signifies only to cast down; that is, those angels, who formerly inhabited the ethereal regions, where there was perpetual light, were, for their sin, cast down into this darksome region of air, where the clearest light is smoke and darkness in comparison with those brighter regions from whence they fell, (for the devil is the prince of the power of the air); and they are called *chains of darkness*, because by the decree of God they can go no farther, cannot ascend higher to those regions of light again; and here they are reserved till the judgment of the last day.

While our Saviour was on earth, it is plain that these evil spirits were not confined to hell, for they possessed the bodies of men, and very much complained that Christ came to torment them before their time, *Matth.* viii. 39. They knew, it seems, there was a time of torment appointed for them, but it was not yet: and yet there was then some place of confinement for them, which is the *ἀβυσσος*, or deep, whatever that signifies, whither they were unwilling to go; and therefore when Christ cast them out of the man, whom they had long and furiously possessed, they beg of him that he would not command them "to go into the deep," *Luke* viii. 31.

I shall only observe farther, that the devils are said to believe and tremble. Now, what is it they believe, and what is it they tremble at, but the last judgment, and that terrible condemnation which they then expect? And therefore they are not under it yet; for faith respects

what is absent and future, and fear does not respect what we suffer at present, but what we expect.

But these are great mysteries, which we cannot now understand; but thus much we do understand, that if these fallen and apostate angels have not yet received their final punishment, but are only reserved in chains of darkness till the judgment of the great day, there is less reason to think that wicked men, who are to be punished with the devil and his angels, should immediately go to hell as soon as they go out of these bodies: and therefore, whatever is meant by those flames wherein Dives was tormented, it is not the last fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

As for good men, those expressions of Scripture of their going to Paradise, especially of their "going to Christ, or being present with the Lord," seem to bid very fair for their going directly to heaven, where Christ is; but the primitive Christians understood them otherwise: that *Paradise* and *Abraham's bosom* was a place of ease and happiness, but not heaven; that no man ascends into heaven till after the resurrection; which Irenæus and Tertullian prove from the example of Christ, to which we must be conformed; for Christ himself did not ascend into heaven till after the resurrection; but as his body rested in the grave, so his soul went into the state of souls departed; and when he arose again, then he ascended into heaven; and thus they say we must do also: when we die, our souls shall live in those places which God has prepared for separate souls; and when we have reassumed our bodies, we shall be admitted into the highest heavens, whither Christ is ascended: and this seems very reasonable, that we should not ascend into heaven, into the immediate presence of God, which signifies our perfect reconciliation to him, without our bodies; the want of which is an argument of *our* apostasy, and *his* displeasure; and all the marks of his displeasure ought to be removed before we appear in his immediate presence. But is not Christ in heaven? And how then can good men *be present with the Lord* after death, if they do not immediately ascend into heaven? Now, as for this, they tell us, that the souls of just men in Paradise have the sight and conversation of angels and archangels, and the vision, or *ὀρασιαν*, of our Saviour, which they think is what is meant by being present with the Lord; though they did not affirm that no good men did immediately ascend into heaven when they died, but expressly taught, that all martyrs did, who died for the name and religion of Christ: and this was the thing which made them in that age so fond of martyrdom, that they thought all martyrs ascended directly into heaven: and if they could have proved this, as it is plain they believed it, that martyrs did

immediately ascend into heaven, and that other Christians did not, who would not have coveted to die a martyr?

Thus I have very fairly and truly represented this matter : and that no man, who has not so carefully considered this, may take offence at it, I shall, *1st*, show you how useful this doctrine is at this time; and *2dly*, that it gives no discouragement to virtue, nor any encouragement to vice.

1st, As for the first, We may consider in the first place, that in such an age as this, wherein we have to deal with so many Atheists and infidels, we ought to take care to make religion reasonable and intelligible: for if we do not, they expose it to scorn and ridicule, and both harden themselves in their own infidelity and corrupt others; and therefore we must take care not to represent any thing absurdly and inconsistently. Now, to say that men who are already judged, and either condemned or absolved, and actually sent to hell or to heaven, should be so solemnly judged over again, and condemned again to hell, or advanced to heaven, sounds oddly to such men; but if the Scripture does not expressly teach such a doctrine, we are at liberty not to teach it; especially if we can give another account of it, which seems as agreeable to Scripture, and more agreeable to the reason and understanding of mankind.

2. Some there are who, observing that mankind shall not be judged till the day of judgment, conclude, that there is no intermediate state, but that the soul sleeps with the body till the day of judgment. A very foolish and unphilosophical opinion; for we may as reasonably think that the soul dies as that it sleeps in a state of separation. If the soul be a spiritual substance, distinct from the body, it may live and act without it; and it is as easy and reasonable to defend the mortality of the soul as its sleeping; for if the soul must sleep when it is separated from the body, it must sleep for ever, if it never be reunited to the body again; that is, it must live and die with the body; for such a sleep as this is not merely an image of death, but death itself. But from what I have now discoursed, it appears, that though there be a great distance between death and judgment, yet the soul does live and act, is happy or miserable in the mean time.

3. This notion does very great service also against Popery: For *1.* It gives an account of a middle state without purgatory. This has greatly imposed upon unlearned men, that the advocates of Popery have proved from the ancient fathers that they owned a middle state, which was neither heaven nor hell; and then presently conclude, that this must be purgatory. Now it is very true, the ancient Christians did own a middle state between death and judgment, which was neither heaven nor hell, but yet never dreamt of a Popish purgatory:

they believed bad men were in a state of punishment as soon as they left these bodies, but not in hell; and that good men were in a state of rest and happiness, but not in heaven; but they never thought of a place of torment to expiate the temporal punishment due to sin when the eternal punishment is remitted; which is the Popish purgatory, and the most barbarous representation of the Christian religion, though the most profitable too, to the church of Rome, that ever was invented.

2. This utterly overthrows the worship of saints in the church of Rome; at least, of all saints who were not martyrs: for saint-worship is founded on this belief, that these saints, when they die, are received into heaven, into the immediate presence of God, and therefore can there powerfully intercede for us. But if these saints are not yet received into heaven, nor shall be till the resurrection, (which was the faith of the primitive Christians, and seems very agreeable to the doctrine of the gospel, as I have now shown you) then there is an end of the worship and intercession of saints.

2dly, This doctrine neither discourages virtue, nor encourages vice. I cannot indeed say but that heaven is a much happier place than paradise; and therefore it is more desirable for good men when they die to go directly to heaven than to paradise: but yet it is sufficient encouragement to the exercise of the most perfect virtues, that as soon as we die we shall be carried by angels into Abraham's Bosom or into Paradise; a place of perfect ease and rest, and as perfect happiness as can be enjoyed out of heaven. Such a paradise, where holy souls dwell, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and confessors, with heaven at the end of it, is a sufficient and abundant reward for all the most difficult and laborious services of this life. That heaven is not yet is no greater discouragement than that we shall not rise from the dead till the day of judgment; that we shall not have our bodies again till they are awakened by the last trumpet: bodies which will be bright and glorious as the sun; which will rise with eternal youth and strength, and beauty. This is a much greater happiness than to live either in paradise or in heaven without our bodies. But this we must stay for, and so we may for heaven; and we may be very well contented to wait for heaven, and for the resurrection of our bodies, in paradise. When we are as happy as paradise can make us, we may very patiently expect the full completion of our happiness in the resurrection of our bodies, and our admission into the highest heavens, to the immediate throne and presence of God.

Thus, though hell is a place of the most perfect torment and misery, for it is the fire prepared for the devil and his angels, and therefore it is much more formidable for sinners to drop immediately into

hell when they die than to suffer any other state of punishment between death and judgment. yet he is a very unreasonable man who does not think the day of judgment time enough to be condemned to hell, and who does not think it misery enough to fall under the power of evil spirits in the mean time. If God think this punishment enough, methinks sinners should; and those who cannot fear hell at the distance of the day of judgment will not fear hell though it were no farther off than death. Those who are not afraid of being tormented, as Dives was, when they go out of these bodies, will not fear hell, though we allow hell to be a state of more perfect misery. I am sure Dives thought those torments so great, that they were sufficient to have made his brethren true penitents, had they known what they must suffer for their sins as soon as they die: and those who will not allow that bad men are immediately condemned to hell as soon as they die, yet must allow that they may be tormented as Dives was. In short, if wicked men do not drop into hell as soon as they die, yet they shall be condemned to hell at the day of judgment; and in the intermediate state between death and judgment shall suffer all those unknown miseries which are prepared for wicked souls till the day of judgment; and those who will not be persuaded by this, will live and die in their sins, though you could convince them that they shall drop into hell as soon as they die.

S E C T. II.

That the day of judgment is appointed.

HAVING thus considered the state between death and judgment, let us now more strictly consider the time of judgment. And here are several things to be observed and explained.

I. That the day of judgment is appointed: "He hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world."

II. That this is a general day for the judgment of the whole world.

III. That this day of judgment will be at the end of the world.

I. That the day of judgment is appointed; "He hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world."

This is a matter of pure revelation; and can be known no other way: for though we have great evidence from reason that God will judge the world, yet to appoint a day is a free act of God's wisdom and counsel; and this must be learnt from revelation: and we cannot have a more express revelation for any thing than we have for this; for St. Paul tells us, in plain words, that God hath appointed a day to judge the world;

and our Saviour, in exprefs words, feveral times refers to this day, as appointed and determined by God: "In that day many ſhall ſay unto me, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" which refers to ſome certain day, *Matth* vii. 22. "And the hour is coming in which "all that are in their graves ſhall hear his voice," *John* v. 28. And "of "that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, "but my Father only," *Matth*.xxiv. 36. which plainly ſignifies, that the day is determined and fixed, becauſe God knows when it ſhall be; that is, he knows when he has appointed it: and if it were not appointed, it had been no great wonder that neither men nor angels know it.

Now, this conſideration, that God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world is not without its uſe. For,

1^{ſt}, This proves the certainty of a future judgment, that the day of judgment is appointed; for we cannot think that God would appoint a day to judge the world unleſs he abſolutely reſolved to judge it.

2^{dly}, This answers the objection againſt a future judgment, from the long delays of it. This St. Peter tells us would be a great objection in the laſt days, or towards the end of the world; 2 *Pet.* iii. 3, 4. "Knowing this firſt, that there ſhall come in the laſt days ſcoffers, walking "after their own luſts, and ſaying, Where is the promiſe of his coming? for ſince the fathers fell aſleep all things continue as they were "from the beginning of the creation." That is, conſider how old the world now is, and how long mankind have been frightened with the fears of judgment: many ages and ſucceſſive generations have lived in expectation of it; but it is not yet, nor any more ſigns of it than when the world was firſt made: and ſince it has been ſo long expected to no purpoſe, it is time to deſpiſe ſuch vain and groundleſs fears.

This ought to be plainly and fully ſtated; for we live in the laſt days, and have many of theſe ſcoffers already among us.

1. But if God have appointed the day of judgment, it is a very fooliſh argument to ſay, that he will not judge the world, becauſe he has not done it yet, unleſs we could prove that the day appointed for judgment is already paſt. God cannot be ſaid to delay to judge the world, when the time he has appointed for judgment is not yet come: for to delay doing any thing, is, not to do it in its proper ſeaſon, when it is time to do it; or when we reſolved and determined to do it: and therefore no man can ſay that God delays to judge the world, unleſs he could tell what day God, in his own infinite wiſdom, appointed for judgment. For,

2. That God appoints a long day for judgment is no argument that he will not judge us.

Thus it was in the deſtruction of the old world a great while before God brought that univerſal deluge on them; but it came at laſt, and ſwept them all away, as St. Peter obſerves: "For this they willingly

"were ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were
 "of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water;
 "whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, per-
 "ished." This general destruction of the old world by water is reason
 enough to believe God, when he threatens to destroy it again by fire;
 "For the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are
 "kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and
 "perdition of ungodly men," *ver* 5, 6, 7. It was a great while before
 God destroyed the old world; and though this second destruction by
 fire is deferred much longer, it will come in its appointed time.

3. For what seems a very long time to us is not so to God; as the
 same Apostle tells us, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years,
 "and a thousand years as one day." God is not affected with the
 succession of time, nor its lingering delays; and therefore is not in
 haste to judge this world before the world is ripe for judgment, and
 when that is, he himself knows best.

For to appoint a day to judge the world is a work of great wisdom
 and counsel. Before God judges the world, it is fit for him to display
 all the various scenes of wisdom, and goodness, and power, and justice,
 in the government of the world; to exercise great patience towards
 sinners, and to make the utmost experiments to reform them, as St. Paul
 tells us, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, (as some men
 "count slackness), but is patient to us-ward, not willing that any
 "should perish, but that all should come to repentance," *ver*. 9.

4. When God finally judges the world, he destroys this present frame
 of things; as it follows in the next verse; "The day of the Lord will
 "come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass
 "away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent
 "heat, and the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be
 "burnt up." Now, it does not become a wise and a good God to be
 hasty in destroying a world that he has made.

And therefore, to reconcile God's destroying the world with his
 essential attributes of wisdom and goodness, there are two things ne-
 cessary.

1st, The incorrigible wickedness of mankind. A wise man will not
 immediately pull down a house he has built till he discovers some irre-
 parable decays in it. Thus God justifies his destruction of the old
 world from the universal corruption of manners, and the incurable
 wickedness of it: "God saw the wickedness of man, that it was great
 "upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his
 "heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he
 "had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And
 "the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created, from the

“face of the earth,” *Gen. vi. 5, 6, 7.* And this was the only reason that could be given to justify so universal a destruction of mankind, that they were universally wicked, excepting one righteous family, which God preserved: and it seems very probable, that the general state of the world will be very wicked and corrupt before the final destruction of the world by fire; for we can conceive no other reason why God should finally destroy this world, but to put an end to the incurable wickedness of men. And this is the account the Scripture gives us of it: we find every where a deplorable description of the wickedness of the last days; “In the last days perilous times shall come: for men” (that is, the generality of mankind) “shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof,” *2 Tim. iii. 1, — 5.* Thus St. Jude tells us, “There shall be mockers in the last times, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts,” *ver. 18.* And St. Peter, as you heard, that “in the last days there should be scoffers, saying, Where is the promise of his coming?” And our Saviour himself plainly intimates what an universal decay there shall be of piety and faith when he comes to judge the world; “Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” *Luke xviii. 8.* Atheism and infidelity shall greatly prevail in the world before the day of judgment; and by this, as St. John said long since, “we know that it is the last time.” And this is one of the signs both of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the day of judgment; “Then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another: and many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved,” *Matth. xxiv. 10, — 13.*

And therefore, the destruction of this world by fire, which is the preparation to the final judgment, is represented as an immediate vengeance on the wickedness of that generation of men who shall then be living on the earth, though, at the same time, the dead shall be raised, and all ungodly men involved in the same ruin: “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,” *2 Thess. i. 8.*; and *Heb. x. 27.* it is called “a fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”

So that one thing God has regard to in appointing the day of judgment is, not to destroy the world till the wickedness of mankind is grown incurable and past remedy; and till this is the state of the world, how much wickedness soever there be in it, it is too soon for a wise and good God to destroy the world he made. But there seems, 2. To be something more than this to justify the final destruction of the world; not only that the present race of mankind is so universally corrupt that they deserve to be universally destroyed, which was the case of the old world, wherein there was but one righteous family, but that mankind is thus incurably wicked after all the wise methods of God's grace and providence to reform the world; for then it is time to put a final end to the state of this world, and to the farther propagation of mankind on it, and to summon all men to judgment to receive according to their works.

This seems to be the reason why Noah's flood did not put a final end to the world, and why God did not at that time call all mankind to judgment; because, though the wickedness of that generation of men was so universal and so incurable that it justified their universal destruction; yet God had new methods of grace, and hidden treasures of wisdom, in reserve for the reforming the world: and therefore, though he purged the earth from its wicked inhabitants, he did not think fit to put an end to the race of men, but preserved Noah and his sons in the ark, (which was the only righteous family then living), to propagate a new generation of men, whom he would try with new methods of grace; the last, and most admirable, and most effectual method of grace was reserved for the last time; the mysterious incarnation of the Son of God, and the power of gospel grace: and when this also shall have lost its effect; when Atheism and infidelity, and all manner of wickedness shall prevail; when the church itself shall be over-run with heresies, schisms, and a mere external form of religion, without the power of it; when men shall walk after their own lusts; when faith shall fail, iniquity abound, and the love of many wax cold, then the end is at hand; God has then tried what mankind will prove long enough; and it is time to put a period to this world, and to the race of mankind, and call them all to judgment. If what some learned men teach be true, that the letter St. John was commanded to write to the seven churches of Asia was prophetic of the seven different states of the Christian church, from the time of Christ to the end of the world, we find that the very last state of the church, when Christ will "spew her out of his mouth," that is, when he will put a final end to the church on earth, is represented by the church of Laodicea, *Rev. iii. 14, &c.* "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans" write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness,

“ the beginning of the creation of God : I know thy works, that thou
 “ art neither cold nor hot : I would thou wert cold or hot : so then,
 “ because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew
 “ thee out of my mouth.” When a true zeal and concernment for
 the faith and practice of Christianity fails in the church, and Atheism
 and infidelity, and all manner of wickedness, prevails in the world,
 these are presages of the near approach of a final judgment.

Now, if this be a fair and reasonable account of the destruction of
 the world, and a future judgment, we need not wonder that God has
 appointed so late a day for it. Seven or eight thousand years is no
 long time for the duration of the world ; especially when we have had
 such a terrible example of God’s justice and vengeance in the destruc-
 tion of the old world already.

We have reason to believe that this world should never have been
 destroyed but for the incurable wickedness of mankind ; for nothing
 else can justify the wisdom and goodness of God in destroying what he
 had made. God could have judged, and rewarded, or punished, parti-
 cular men without destroying the world ; but when mankind is grown
 universally and incurably wicked, it does not become God to suffer
 this earth to be an eternal nursery of Atheists and rebels against the
 Majesty of heaven ; and this makes it necessary for God to destroy it :
 but then the wisdom and goodness of God requires that this should be
 done with great patience and long-suffering, and after the disappoint-
 ment of all the wise methods of his grace in reforming the world ; and
 then no man can say that God has hitherto too long delayed the final
 judgment ; some thousand years is no long trial to save the world, and
 mankind, whom he hath made, from final destruction.

(1.) And therefore let no man laugh at a future judgment and
 final destruction of this world, as if it would never be, because it is not
 yet. God is in no haste to destroy the world ; but when he sees it
 ripe for destruction, that is the day he has appointed for judgment :
 such scoffers as these are certain forerunners of that day ; and unless
 there be still a new resurrection of true faith and piety, (which we
 hope for), it cannot be far off: how long soever such men may think
 God delays, yet “ their judgment lingereth not, and their damnation
 “ slumbereth not,” *c Pet. ii. 3.* Let us all remember what our Saviour
 tells us, “ If that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth
 “ his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat
 “ and drink with the drunken ; the lord of that servant shall come
 “ in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is
 “ not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and shall appoint him his
 “ portion with the hypocrites ; there shall be weeping and gnashing
 “ of teeth,” *Mat. xxiv. 48,—51.*

It is no argument that judgment is a great way off because men are secure, and can laugh at the thought of it; for the more secure the world is the nearer it is to judgment; the very day that judgment shall overtake them they shall least of all think of it; as it must needs be when the world shall be so over-run with Atheism and infidelity; and, therefore, the day of judgment is said "to come like a thief in the night;" that is, suddenly and by surprise, when we are asleep and secure, and least suspect it. *1 Theff. v. 2, 4. 2 Pet. iii. 10.* As Christ threatens the church of Sardis, *Rev. iii. 3.* "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Thus *Mat. xxiv. 37, &c.* Christ tells us, that the day of judgment, or the coming of the Son of man, is like the days of Noah. "For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of man be." The like we have, *Luke xvii. 26, 27.* to which he adds the destruction of Sodom: "Like-wise also as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all: even thus it shall be in the day when the Son of man is revealed," *ver. 28, 29, 30.*

(2.) This exactly agrees with what I have now discoursed, that God will not destroy the world till the wickedness of mankind is almost universal and incurable; for if this be true, God cannot destroy the world till men are secure and fearless of judgment; that is, till they are such Atheists and infidels, so immersed in sensual pleasures, so given up to a reprobate sense, that they have no thoughts of God and another world, nor any concernment for a future judgment.

Till the generality of mankind are come to this secure state, they are not so hopeless, nor so outrageously and irrecoverably wicked, as to provoke God to a final destruction of the world: a sense of God, and the fear of judgment, will restrain the wickedness of mankind, and make them more modest and cautious, give check to their vices, alarm and awaken their consciences, whether they will or no. While this sense and belief is preserved in the world, there must be a great many good men, and a great many more who pretend to piety and virtue; and though there may be here and there an Atheist among them, this is not considerable; this does not make the state of mankind hopeless and desperate, and does not come up to the description of those times when God will destroy and judge the world.

And to observe this by the by; this is the true account why the judg-

ments of God in this world, either upon private persons, or public societies, kingdoms, and nations, surprise men when they are most secure, and think least of judgment; when, as the prophet Jeremy speaks, "They cry, Peace, peace, when there is no peace," *Jer. vi. 14.* I need not tell you, that this is not to take us at an advantage, as a weak enemy sometimes does, who wants strength and power to hurt us but upon a surprise; for no sinner, all the sinners of the world, cannot resist God's power, though they had never so much warning to make their defence.

Nor is it that God takes so much pleasure in punishing us, and in executing his judgments upon the world, that he will give us no warning of it, that we may not prevent it by a timely repentance, and make our peace with him; for he is infinitely good and merciful, he delights to do good, and to show mercy, but judgment is his strange work; and he has sufficiently denounced his judgments against incorrigible sinners, if they would believe him, and take warning by it.

But the reason why the judgments of God so often surprise men in their security, while they are asleep, and dreaming of nothing but what is prosperous and happy, of the return of *Astræa* and the golden age, is, because their sins, which make them ripe for judgment, and will not suffer God to stay his hand any longer, have made them also secure; either they have sinned away all belief of God and his providence, and a future judgment, or have sinned away the sense of those particular sins which they are guilty of; or to make themselves secure, they have, by the help of enthusiasm and superstition, reconciled the hopes of heaven, and the sense of God's love and favour, with the practice of the most provoking impieties; that is, their love to sin has made them secure, and then there is little hope that they will ever forsake their sins; and this makes them very fit to be the examples of God's justice and displeasure.

And the same account is to be given of the day of judgment; it will surprise men as a thief in the night, not because they never heard that God would judge the world, for God has sufficiently declared this, and given us timely notice to prepare for it; but men will, at that time, have sinned away the belief of a God, and of a future judgment to come, or have laid this belief asleep with some intoxicating superstitions and formalities; and this is so hopeless and irrecoverable a state, that it makes it time for God to judge the world.

(3) And this may give some probable account both why the day of judgment is deferred so long, as some men are apt to speak, (though God knows they have little reason to think it long, considering what account they are able to give, and what sentence they are like to receive), and why the particular time of judgment is concealed from us.

While the sense of judgment continues in the world, it must make a great many good men, and restrain the wickedness and impiety of bad men; and, as you have heard, God will not destroy the world while it is in an hopeful and recoverable state; but the long delay of judgment (as men are apt to call it) wears off the sense and belief of it, and then men grow wicked without fear and restraint, and then it is time for God to judge the world.

Thus if God fixes and determines the day of judgment, upon the foresight of such a general impiety as will deserve a final excision, God cannot reveal this to the world: for one would think it impossible, did the world know this before-hand, but the age of judgment should be the most devout and religious age that ever had been from the beginning of the world; and then that would not be a fit time to destroy the world; and God could not foresee it the properest time of judgment.

It is abundantly sufficient that God gives us all reasonable evidence and assurance that he will judge the world; but there is no reason to tell us what particular time he will judge the world; nay, it is not fitting that we should know it.

Had men known some thousand years ago how long the day of judgment should be deferred, it had so much weakened the argument of a future judgment, by removing it a great way off, that the world might much better have deserved to be destroyed at any other time than in likelihood it would do, if men certainly knew the time when the day of judgment comes: and if the general belief of judgment will not make us good men, it is not fit that we should certainly know the time of judgment, no more than that we should know the time of our death, or be converted by a sight of heaven or hell.

God reserves this as a secret in his own breast, which neither men nor angels shall know; which is the best way to make the belief of a future judgment effectual upon all ages of the world, especially since that express revelation which the gospel has made of it. This instruction our Saviour himself gives us, that, since we know not the day of judgment, we should always watch, and be ready prepared for it: "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come: "But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in "what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and "would not have suffered his house to be broken up: therefore be ye "also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man "cometh," *Mat. xxiv. 42, 43, 44.* And if this was good advice in our Saviour's days, it more nearly concerns us, on whom the end of the world is come.

(4.) There is one thing more I shall observe from this discourse, not

to be offended though you see Atheism and infidelity prevail in the world, and the true Christian faith begin to fail, and the love of many wax cold: thus it must be towards the end of the world; and if we now see the beginnings of it, it is no great wonder.

This is indeed a great temptation to men who are governed by examples, to hear the first principles of religion called in question, and the great fundamental articles of our faith made matter of dispute and controversy; nay, the plainest rules of life ridiculed and exploded; but if these things should not be, the world would never come to an end: God cannot destroy a believing and righteous nation, much less a righteous world, a world of believers and saints. And if it be our portion to fall into the dregs of time, into these last days, when there shall be scoffers walking after their own ungodly lusts, let us consider that this is no more than was foretold; thus it must be towards the end of the world; and therefore, this ought not to weaken the credit of religion no more than the fulfilling of prophecies does. Let us remember how sacred this faith hath been for sixteen hundred years; how many martyrs and confessors it has had; how God has preserved it against all the powers and oppositions of the world; how it has triumphed over Pagan idolatries, and, which is more than that, triumphed over the lusts and vices of the world in the exemplary self-denial, mortification, and divine and heavenly conversations of its professors: and this I think is such an argument of its divinity as may defend us against the wit, and raillery, and impudence, of professed Atheists and debauchees, who, till of late, have themselves been the scorn and derision of mankind.

S E C T. III.

The day God has appointed is a general day of Judgment.

II. **T**HIS day God has appointed is a general day of judgment, or a day to judge the whole world. All mankind shall be summoned before the tribunal of Christ, and be tried, and condemned or acquitted, in the general assembly of saints and angels.

What an amazing sight will this be! to see all mankind start out of their graves, and appear before their Judge! to have one view of the whole race of men, of all successive generations from Adam to the end of the world! Such an assembly as never was before, never will be till that day, and never will be after it. Could we look on as unconcerned spectators at that day, what an entertainment would here be, only to see all mankind together; all the men of name and renown, whose fame is recorded in story, who have signalized themselves in

their several ages by their piety and virtue, and wisdom and valour; or it may be by their vices; but this will be no time to gratify our curiosity, when we all meet to receive our final doom.

It more concerns us at present to draw another scene of things, and to imagine how differently men will appear at the day of judgment from what they do in this world. We shall see all mankind together rise with their own bodies, just the same men that they were, but yet *quantum mutatus ab illo!* they will not look altogether as they did; there will be some change in their countenances which will betray very different passions, and give a very different air and aspect to them.

We may easily imagine that Atheists and infidels, who have disputed very subtly and philosophically against a God and religion, and broke many a witty jest upon heaven and hell, will be not a little amazed when they shall see all their philosophy confuted, and their jests quite spoiled by the appearance of the Judge.

What surprise and astonishment will then be seen in the looks of secure sinners, who never thought of judgment, but reckoned themselves very safe by banishing the thoughts of it! As if God would not judge them unless they thought of being judged.

The brave and the bold sinners, who mocked at fear, especially at the fear of God, as a base and unmanly passion, will not be able to conceal their fears then; but even those mighty hectors, the great disturbers of mankind, who carried fear and terror in their looks, and made the world tremble before them, will then stand trembling before their Judge, and "call to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, " and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb."

On the other hand, with what triumph will good men lift up their heads! The poor, the despised, the persecuted, the reproached, the vilified worshippers of the crucified Jesus, and the disciples of the cross, their sorrows will then fly away like the shades of night at the approach of the sun, their tears will be dried up, and we shall see nothing but secure joy give lustre and brightness to their looks.

We are extremely imposed on by the present appearance of things: vice looks gay and bold, and fearless in this world; and virtue many times as mean and contemptible as injustice and oppression can make it, that it would be of great use to us sometimes to remove the scene from this world to the day of judgment, when all mankind shall appear together, the greatest appearance that ever was; and therefore it is much more considerable how we shall appear then than how we appear in this world.

But the inquiry here is, why God judges all the world at once, and summons all mankind together to receive their final sentence? Now, that God will do so is very plain; why he does it, he has not told us;

but whoever wisely considers this matter will discover great and excellent ends, which may be served by such a public judgment; and that may satisfy us that there is great reason why God should do it; and these may be referred to two general heads: 1. With respect to God himself. 2. With respect to men, both good and bad men.

1st, With respect to God: and this universal judgment greatly tends to advance the divine name and glory.

1. As I hinted to you before, this will justify the Divine Providence, and display all the various wisdom, and expound and unriddle all the secret mysteries, of it: when God comes to judge the world, it is to justify himself as well as to judge men; for what St. Paul says, is most properly applicable to the last judgment, "Let God be true, and every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged," *Rom. iii. 4*. And St. Jude makes this one great end of the last judgment; "The Lord shall come with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all; to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him," *ver. 14, 15*. How many such hard speeches do we daily hear against the Divine Providence? and how hard are good men, who know but little of the matter, put to it to answer the cavils and reproaches of Atheists and infidels? We can indeed say enough in general to vindicate the Divine wisdom, and justice, and goodness; but there are a thousand particular cases which seem very hard, which we can say nothing to, because we know nothing of them.

But when all the world shall be summoned before God's tribunal, all the ages and generations of men, we shall then have a perfect history of Providence, and that will expound the reasons of things which now are obscure. When we shall hear how every particular man, every age and generation of men, every country and nation, have behaved themselves, and how God dealt with them; what talents they were intrusted with, and what account they give; then all mouths will be stopped, and the whole world will become guilty before God, *Rom. iii. 19*. Then we shall see an entire chain of providences, and all the various and intricate turnings of the Divine wisdom in its different forms and administrations, but still within the sphere and circle of justice and goodness. How shall we then admire God, when we shall see all these wonderful and curious scenes unfolded! when we shall observe the gradual and regular advances of goodness in the several ages of the world, proportioned to the wants and capacities of men, till it come to a full maturity and perfection of gospel-grace! What a delightful prospect will this be to good men! how will it enlarge their

knowledge ! increase their wonder ! inflame their devotions ! How will it confound bad men, especially all the profane scoffers at God and his providence ! how will this aggravate and increase their torments, that they will be forced to admire and justify God in their own damnation, which must turn all their rage and fury upon themselves !

This is reason enough why God should judge the world altogether, to justify himself to all his creatures, and to make a glorious discovery of all the wonders and mysteries of his grace and providence : good men see enough at present to admire and praise God ; but now, as St. Paul tells us, “ we know in part, and we prophesy in part : but “ when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall “ be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child : but when I became a man, “ I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly, “ but then face to face : now I know in part ; but then shall I know “ even as also I am known,” 1 *Cor.* xiii. 9,—12. The Divine wisdom will never appear so glorious as at the day of judgment, because it will never be so perfectly known as then, when he shall come “ to “ be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe,” 2 *Theff.* i. 10. What good man would not long to see that blessed day, which will perfect his soul with the knowledge, and love, and admiration of God ; and give him such clear, raised, and divine thoughts and passions as are fit for heaven, and the immediate presence of God, whither he is a-going ? What wise man will not resolve to be very good, that at that day he may see the glory of God without terror and astonishment, with all those raptures and ecstasies with which such new and bright appearances of the Divine wisdom will fill the soul ?

2. God summons all mankind together to judgment, that men and angels may be witnesses of his equal and impartial justice. We are all equally God’s creatures ; the rich and the poor, the honourable and the vile, the prince and the subject, are alike to him ; and justice requires that they should be alike ; that the best judge in the world should respect no man’s person in judgment. Now, there is no such way to convince all the world that God is an equal and impartial, that is, a very just and righteous Judge, as to judge all the world together ; for then they themselves may see whether God be partial or not.

But there is a great deal more I mean by this ; for the providence of God in this world is very liable to this charge of partiality ; that he has not an equal regard to all his creatures. I do not mean with reference to their fortune and station in this world, that some are rich, others poor ; some princes and nobles intrusted with great powers, others subjects, and exposed to the wills and lusts of princes ; for this is more easily accounted for, such different ranks of men being neces-

fary to good order and government in the world: but I mean with respect to their souls and their eternal state, that God has not taken equal care to instruct all mankind in their duty, to acquaint them with the danger of sin, and the rewards and punishments of the next life, and the certainty of a future judgment: and this is too visible to be denied.

God suffered mankind to fall into idolatry, and when they had corrupted their natural notions of good and evil, sent no prophet among them to instruct them better: and when, after some ages, he called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, and, having tried his faith and obedience, entered into covenant with him; yet he confined his covenant to his posterity, whom he chose for his peculiar people, and took no visible care of the rest of the world: and though this was a great privilege of Israel above the rest of mankind, yet the Mosaical law was but a weak and imperfect dispensation, but a childish pedagogy, and the Jewish church but in the state of servants, or of an heir under age.

And though God did at last send Christ into the world, to make a perfect revelation of his will, yet it was towards the end of the world; and what a wonderful difference has this made between those who enjoy the light of the gospel and the rest of mankind? As if they had not all the same Maker, or were not equally his creatures: and yet how little a part of the world is there still which have the gospel preached to them, and how much less which have it sincerely preached?

The justice of God, I confess, cannot be impeached upon this account; for God was not wanting to any of them in what was necessary: he made them reasonable and understanding creatures, gave them sufficient natural evidence of his own being and providence, and the natural notices of good and evil, and the natural expectations of rewards and punishments, which St Paul tells us is enough to render them inexcusable: "That the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are known by the things that are seen, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse," *Rom. i. 20.* And what is more than this is pure grace, which God may give or deny when or where he pleases. Nor is the goodness of God, and care of his creatures, to be blamed upon this score; for in every age he did what was wise and fit to be done: for the several ages of the world required different dispensations of grace; and in the fulness of time, when the world was prepared for it, he sent his Son. But yet we must confess, that God has done more for Jews than he did for Heathens, and more for Christians than he did for either, which is an objection that troubles the minds even of some good men, who do not thoroughly consider things, and darkens and obscures their notions of the Divine goodness.

And when all the world is met together to judgment, it seems at first view to be a very plausible objection, that God has not dealt equally

with them all, especially when their eternal state depended on it; and the want of those means of grace which God afforded others, though he owed them to neither, made no less a difference between them than heaven and hell.

This indeed is a very great difficulty, but I doubt not but the equal justice of the last judgment will answer it; for otherwise I cannot imagine that God will summon all the world together before his tribunal, if he did not intend to deal equally by all: the last judgment will not be over-ruled by power and sovereign prerogative, for that removes no objections, but only silences them; whereas God, at the last day, will justify himself as well as judge the world; and therefore, whatever difference and variety there has been in the external administration of his grace, the final judgment shall be very equal, and he will appeal to men and angels for the equality as well as for the justice of it.

How God will bring all these unevennesses of his grace and providence to an equality is hard for us to say; but yet we know there are some possible ways of doing it: to make great abatements and allowances for invincible ignorance and mistake, for the faults and miscarriages of education, for the wickedness and corruption of the age wherein men live, and for want of the means of grace and knowledge; and to exact improvements proportionable to our receipts, and to those greater advantages we enjoy; and to increase and lessen rewards and punishments by these measures, will bring men pretty near an equal level; according to our Saviour's rule, "That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more," *Luke xii. 47, 48.* So much are those nominal Christians mistaken, who are so far from thinking that God expects more from them than from ignorant Heathens, that they hope to escape with those vices for which they themselves think fit that Heathens should be damned: no, beloved, God will judge all the world together; and that is a demonstration to me, that he will be very equal in his justice; and then he must demand more from Christians than from Heathens, because we have received more.

3. A general judgment is most for the glory of God, in punishing bad men, and rewarding the good. When a whole world of sinners stand trembling before God's tribunal, and receive their final doom and sentence from his mouth, this is a more visible triumph of his justice than had they all silently dropt into hell as they went out of this world, and we had heard no more of them to eternity. The wisdom

of all governments has taught them the necessity of public executions: and when God would make himself known in the world, he executes some public and visible judgments, which may command our notice and observance: thus he did when he spared Pharaoh from the destruction of those numerous plagues he sent on Egypt, and reserved him for a more glorious execution, when he overthrew him and all his host in the Red sea. Thus he did, when he sent fire from heaven to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah; and in numerous other instances. These terrible executions, indeed, are intended by God as public warnings to the world; to teach men to fear God, and reverence his power and justice, and prevent their own ruin by a timely repentance. Now, this end they cannot serve in the other world; when the devil and his angels, and all bad men, are involved in the same ruin, and there are no sinners left to take warning, and learn righteousness by it: but saints and angels are spectators and witnesses of the vengeance, and adore and praise the righteous Judge of the world; and devils and all wicked men see and feel it too, and tremble and fly before him; are forced to confess his power and glory, though with anguish and despair. This is a glorious and visible triumph over all his enemies, and all the powers of darkness.

And how glorious is God in his saints, when he publicly rewards their faith and patience, their obedience and sufferings, for his name's sake; when, in the sight of all the world, he clothes them with pure light, and receives them into his eternal kingdom! The glory of God is the public manifestation of his justice, and goodness, and power; now, there cannot be a mere unquestionable demonstration of the inflexible justice of God than the final destruction of the devil and his angels, and all wicked men; there cannot be a more glorious manifestation of the goodness of God than in the final rewards of piety and virtue; and nothing can be more public and visible than that which is done before all the world. And this makes it reasonable for God to summon all the world before his tribunal, to make himself visibly glorious to all his creatures.

God has been greatly dishonoured in the world: some have denied his being and providence; others have set up rival and opposite gods, and given his worship to devils, to dead men, to wood and stone; nay, to the vilest and most contemptible creatures: others have framed very unworthy notions of God, and clothed him with their own weaknesses and passions; made him either a tyrant and a devil, or such a tame, easy, fond being, as men may make bold with without danger: others profane his name, corrupt his worship, or neglect or despise it: some think themselves too big to serve God, others too little to be observed by him: some ridicule his laws, others take no notice of them; and

there are very few who are sincere worshippers of him, and acknowledge and submit to his authority and power; and when God has been so much dishonoured in the world, I think it is very fit, that when he judges the world, he should vindicate his own glory, make it public and visible, and force all his creatures to own and confess it; and the most effectual way to do this is, by summoning all mankind before him, and judging them according to their works. Thus we see what reason there is, with respect to God, why he should not judge men singly, and send them privately and silently to heaven or hell, but appoint a general day of judgment.

2dly, There is great reason for this too, with respect to men, both to good and to bad men; for this is part of the reward of virtue, and of the punishment of vice.

Many good men have been used with the utmost contempt and scorn, if they cannot comply with their company, and do as their neighbours do; if they boggle at popular and fashionable vices, they are gazed on as so many comets and prodigies, and would be contented to be gazed on, were they as far out of the reach of danger too as those meteors are: some call them fools, others knaves and hypocrites, and treat them accordingly; and is it not fit that God should vindicate these men, who have suffered infamy and reproach for his sake? that he should publicly own them, applaud and reward their virtue? and what a glorious vindication is this, if we can but have patience to expect it? What a little contemptible scene is this world; nay, this little corner of the world where we live? for whether we be praised or reproached, it is likely we are never heard of out of the parish and neighbourhood, or city, or kingdom, where we live: and cannot we be contented to let a whole parish, or city, or kingdom, despise us, to be publicly owned by God in the general assembly of men and angels?

Good men do a great many good actions privately, which few or none are conscious to but God and themselves; and therefore they lose the praise which is due to such secret virtues in this world: but our Saviour hath promised, that such men shall have praise of God; that if we pray and fast, and give alms in secret, "our Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward us openly," *Mat. vi.* And this is a great encouragement to the practice of the most secret virtues, that we shall be openly rewarded for them.

Good men are many times great sufferers in this world; are not only reproached but persecuted, lose their estates, their liberties, their lives, for Christ's sake: and though God has strictly forbid them to avenge themselves, yet he will execute vengeance on their enemies; and do it publicly, and make them the spectacles and witnesses of it.

On the other hand; wickedness is many times very glorious and triumphant in this world; is so far from suffering shame, which is the just reward of it, that it is applauded and courted; and the greatest prodigies of wickedness are adored for their prosperous villanies: but yet shame is the just reward of sin; and it must have it at one time or other. And nothing can more effectually cast shame and contempt upon sinners than a general judgment: when they shall be publicly arraigned and condemned in the great assembly of men and angels, this will confound the most glorious sinner, who never blushed before. For though, while bad men are supported with power, or are the most numerous party, and can out-vote and out-laugh the rest of the world, they can secure themselves against the sense of shame; yet, when they appear before such a Judge, and have their villanies exposed to all the world; when they are stripped of their riches, and honours, and power, and see all their admirers and companions past laughing and flattery, and themselves despised and scorned by God and his holy saints and angels, and condemned to everlasting miseries, it will then be impossible for them any longer to glory in their shame. Confusion will then cover their faces; and it would be thought very merciful to be damned privately, without seeing their Judge, and being exposed to public scorn and censure.

Thus there are a great many wicked things done privately, and concealed from the eyes of men, and many times gilded over with a form and counterfeit appearance of religion; and such secret villains not only escape public shame, but are thought very extraordinary men and great saints. Now, it is very fitting that such men also should have their mask and disguise taken off, and be exposed to the view of the world just as they are; and this God will do in that day, when he will judge the secrets of men's hearts, and bring to light the hidden works of darkness: and then what will it avail them to pass for saints in this world, when, at the day of judgment, they shall be known, and be doubly scorned, both for their wickedness and for their hypocrisy?

What a severe aggravation will it be of the condemnation of the wicked, to see good men, whom they despised and persecuted, whose lives they thought folly and madness, now owned and rewarded by God; as our Saviour speaks, "To see them come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, and they themselves shut out?" This will be a confounding sight at that day; and as little as such men now value heaven, to see the bright and dazzling crowns of those blessed saints will pierce their souls, and wound them to eternity.

This justifies the wisdom of God, in appointing a general day of judgment, to reward good men, and to condemn the wicked. But there is one good-natured objection against this, which respects good men; for there are few good men but may have some very wicked relations, who yet are very dear to them; and how can they bear to be witnesses to their final condemnation; to hear that sentence pronounced on them, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." We tremble at the thoughts of it now; and one would think it should overcast the glory of that day to such blessed saints, to see such a terrible execution upon those who were so dear to them: but this is such a mistake as the Sadducees' objections against the resurrection, concerning "the woman who had seven husbands, whose wife she should be of the seven at the resurrection, for they all had her," *Mat. xxii. 27.* But our Saviour told them, "At the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God in heaven," *ver. 30.* Thus it is here; those natural affections and passions, which are of so great use in this world, and make us so nearly concerned for children and other relations, are not the measure of our kindness and friendship, and concernment in the other world; they are necessary here many times to supply the place of reason and virtue, and to prompt us to do those good offices by the impatience and uneasiness of a passion, which the generality of mankind would not do from wiser principles: but the end of these passions is served in this world, and there is no occasion for them in the next; and therefore we shall feel no uneasiness or disturbance from them. Good men will have no friends, no relations, in the other world, but those who are truly good, who are members of the same mystical body of Christ, the children of God, and heirs of the same happiness and glory.

To conclude: I shall only observe this farther; how vain it is for bad men to hope to defend themselves from shame and punishment by their numbers. They may, I confess, do it in this world, when they have to deal with men; though, when God comes to judge them, even in this world, the most powerful combinations of sinners are but like chaff before the wind. But if ever numbers would do, it would be at the day of judgment, when the devil and his angels and all bad men, shall be summoned together: and if they cannot then defend themselves when their whole force is united, but stand as criminals before their Judge, and receive their sentence from him, it becomes us to fear and tremble before that powerful Judge, who has all nature at his command, and all devils and wicked men in chains, and with the word of his mouth can condemn them to eternal torments.

S E C T. IV.

The day of Judgment is at the end of the world.

III. **T**HE day of judgment is at the end of the world: That it will be so, and the reasons why it will be so, are very plain, from what I have already discoursed. Our Saviour tells us, that it is at the end of the world, when the angels shall separate between the wheat and the tares which grow in the same field; between the good and the bad fish that were taken in the same net, *Matth. xiii.* It is in the evening of the world, when the lord comes to reckon with his servants, and to reward those who have laboured in his vineyard, *Matth. xx.* For when Christ comes to judgment, this world shall be set on fire, and this present visible frame of things shall be dissolved, as St. Peter tells us, *2 Pet. iii. 10, 11, 12.* Upon which account Christ is said to come in flaming fire; of which more hereafter. And if God will judge all mankind together, the day of judgment must be at the end of the world.

But besides this, it seems very reasonable and congruous that the final judgment and the end of the world should come together; or, that when God finally judges all mankind, he should put an end to this habitable earth.

For this earth was made for the habitation of man, and all things in it for his use and delight, and therefore it receives its fate and destiny with man too.

Paradise was the habitation of innocent man; and had man continued innocent, and peopled the world with an innocent and holy race, the whole world must have been a paradise; but when man had sinned, and had no right to so easy and happy a life, the ground was cursed for his sake; *Gen. iii. 17, 18, 19.* "Cursed be the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread, till thou return unto the ground."

When all flesh had corrupted their ways, excepting Noah and his family, God destroyed the old world with its wicked inhabitants: and to this day, besides that original curse which still rests upon the earth, Nature suffers for the sins of man, and revives and flourishes again as he returns to his duty: "He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein." And, on the other hand, "He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water-springs. And there he maketh the hungry to

" dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation," *Pfal.* cvii. 33, 34, 35, 36.

It were easy to harangue here, and describe the ruins and desolations which the judgments of God have brought upon the most flourishing countries for the sins of the inhabitants: famine and pestilence and sword: the sword, which carries all other judgments along with it. But, God knows, we live in an age wherein there is no need of haranguing about it; this is seen, and felt, and heard every day; such miseries as are beyond the description of the most eloquent tongue or pen: God grant that we may only hear of them, that we may take warning by what others suffer, and appease the wrath of God by a timely repentance.

Now, for the same reason, when God judges all mankind, he will put an end to this present state of things. When man, for whom this earth was framed, shall dwell no longer on it, but all good men shall be received into heaven, and all bad men condemned to hell, this world has lasted as long as it was made for, and must now be cast into a new mould and frame.

For so indeed the Scripture represents it, not that this world shall be destroyed, but that it shall be new-made; that as the whole creation is subject to vanity by Adam's curse, so it shall be redeemed from vanity and corruption too, when man is. It shall be purged by fire, and a new incorruptible world shall spring out of its ashes; *Rom.* viii. 19, 20, 21, 22. " For the earnest expectation of the the creature," which must signify this visible creation, " waiteth for the manifestation of the " sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not " willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in " hope: because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the " bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of " God:" or when the sons and children of God shall be delivered from corruption. " For we know the whole creation groaneth, and " travaileth in pain until now. And thus St. Peter tells us, that at the last judgment this world shall be destroyed with fire: " Neverthe- " less we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new " earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." *2 Pet.* iii. 13. Where St. Peter refers to the prophesy of *Isaiah*, *ch.* lxv. 17. " For behold, I create " new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remem- " bered nor come into mind." Which St. Peter understands in a literal sense, not merely of a more prosperous state of things in this world.

And thus St. John, at the conclusion of his Revelations, immediately after his account of the last judgment, gives us a description of this new heaven and new earth, *Rev.* xxi. 1, &c. " And I saw a new hea- " ven, and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were

“ passed away, and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, The tabernacle of God is with men, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.” And the rest of that book is spent in describing the glory of the great city, the holy Jerusalem, the river of the water of life, proceeding from the throne of God, and of the Lamb, and the tree of life which bore twelve manner of fruits.

These are great mysteries, which we cannot perfectly understand yet, especially what St. John says about the new Jerusalem’s coming down from heaven, to take up its seat and habitation on this new earth; that there is the throne of God, and of the Lamb, where God dwells, and which he enlightens with his presence, and from whence he drives away death, and sorrow, and pain; which seems to signify, that as the old heavens and old earth are destroyed by fire, in vengeance on its wicked inhabitants, so this new heaven and new earth, which God makes after the destruction of the old, is the seat of the blessed after their resurrection from the dead; which I confess I know not how to understand.

But this gives a plain account why the final judgment, when good men shall receive their final reward, shall not be till the end of the world, because this old world must be destroyed before God makes those new heavens and new earth: the final destruction of bad men will begin with the destruction of this old world; and the rewards and happiness of good men shall be consummated in the new world, whatever that be; where they shall dwell for ever in the immediate presence of God and of the Lamb.

Now, that God defers the day of judgment to the end of the world, may, I. Convince us of God’s great patience and long-suffering towards sinners; for he forbears his execution as long as he can forbear destroying the world; and that we may be sure is as long as wisdom and justice will permit. To destroy a world is a work of as great wisdom and counsel as to make one; nay, the Divine goodness will easily justify the making of a world at any time; for no time is unfit to exercise such acts of goodness as will justify themselves: but for God to destroy the world which he has made, without great necessity for it, reflects upon his wisdom and goodness in making it: the wise Maker of the world can have no inclination to destroy it; and though the justice of Providence may require some more hasty executions to

maintain good order and government, and to give check to vice, yet the final destruction of the world requires all wise delays; and sinners can expect no more of God than to defer their final sentence as long as he can defer the end of the world. It is great pity that such goodness and patience should be so monstrously abused; that men should harden themselves in sin, and conclude that God will not judge the world, because he is so unwilling to destroy it; but this will justify the severity of the last judgment, that it is not the effect of a hasty and sudden fury, but of mature counsel; that God did not want goodness to spare sinners, as long as wisdom and justice could spare them. To be slow to execute judgment is as essential to goodness, as it is justice at last to punish: and to conclude that God will not punish at all, because he is patient, and delays to punish, is to prove that God cannot be just because he is good.

2. That God destroys the world when he judges it, is an undeniable proof of the severity of the last judgment; for what a terrible vengeance is that which fires the world, and dissolves this present frame of nature! This "is a fiery indignation" indeed "to devour the adversary," *Heb. x. 27.*; when bad men and wicked spirits shall be encompassed with flames and smoke, without any possibility to escape; for whither can they fly out of a fired world? when "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt away with fervent heat; the earth also, and all that is therein, shall be burnt up."

There are a great many brave sinners, who mock at fear, and harden themselves against hell itself; but if they can be serious but for some few minutes, let them imagine all the world on fire about them; the heavens covered with thick darkness, and the whole earth but one volcano, one *Ætna* or *Vesuvius*, vomiting up rivers of burning sulphur, and themselves plunged in the midst of it; let them try how they can bear this thought before they laugh at hell, for this will certainly be the state of sinners at the day of judgment: and should not this make us fear and tremble before that great and powerful Judge? "Who knoweth the power of his wrath? who can live with devouring fire, who can dwell with everlasting burnings?"

What an irresistible Judge is he who can destroy the world, and all sinners with it! The world, that was their god, and now will be their funeral pile! according to the fate of some Heathen idolaters, they shall be sacrificed to their own god, and tormented in the embraces of a burning idol.

The destruction of the world gives a terrible pomp and solemnity to the last judgment: it will astonish bad men, and break their stout hearts, to see the world in flames; it will convince them to purpose that God is come to judge them, and that he is very severe and terrible in his

judgments. Who can describe the horrors and agonies and consternation of that day! Cast your thoughts back a little upon that terrible day, when you saw London on fire, when you saw your houses and treasure all vanish into dust and smoke: what did you think then of the power and justice of God? And yet this was no more than a little bonfire compared with the universal conflagration: though you could not save your houses and furniture and treasure from its rage and fury, yet there was room left for your own escape. And if this were so amazing a sight, as all of you who saw it cannot but confess it was, what will it be to see the whole world on fire, and yourselves encompassed in the flames of it! To see all those tempting objects, all the instruments of your pleasures, all the riches and glory of the world, which were the fuel of your lusts, now turned into a devouring fire to torment you, to expiate those flames they kindled in your souls by sensible and material flames! Who would make this world his portion and inheritance who considers the end of it? It looks charmingly indeed at present, it invites and caresses, and lays baits and snares for us; but if we will have the world for our portion, it must be our portion too at the day of judgment: and consider how you should like its courtship when it incircles you with flames and smoke and darkness! Those who chuse the world for their portion can never remove out of it, and therefore must be contented to share fortunes with it, to smile when it smiles, and to burn when it burns.

With what triumph will good men at that day see themselves out of the reach of a burning world! They betimes made their escape out of this world, as foreseeing its approaching ruin; they were not of the world while they lived in it, but disentangled their affections from this world while their bodies were confined below: and such divine souls, whose conversation was in heaven, as soon as they get loose from these bodies ascend far above the sphere of corruption, out of danger either of being tempted or being hurt by this world.

With what triumph will they behold God erect a new world for them to inhabit; create a new heaven and a new earth, where he will place his throne and tabernacle, and dwell among them, and be their God!

What bad man can hear these things without terror and amazement? what good man does not long for this happy day, for this marriage of the Lamb? when, "the new Jerusalem shall come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," *Rev. xxi. 2.*

3. That the day of judgment is at the end of the world, proves that this judgment is final and irreversibile, because this present state of things is come to an end; and as this puts a final conclusion to this world,

so to all accounts relating to it : this world is a changeable scene, but the next world is eternal ; and therefore as good and bad men are disposed of in the next world, they must continue for ever. This world will be destroyed, and therefore bad men can never return into it again, to act over a new part, and to correct the sins and follies of their former lives, as Origen conceived they should, after a long time of punishment, when the fleshly principle is thoroughly subdued by the torments they have suffered : which opinion, how much mercy and good nature soever there may be in it, has not the least countenance from Scripture, nor any foundation, that I know of, in reason. When the world where they lived, and where they sinned, is at an end, I think there is an end also of their acting any new part in it.

And that new world, where good men shall dwell in the immediate presence of God, shall last for ever; there is no death, no pain, no crying, for there can be no sin there; there is no devil, no world to tempt, and nothing within to be tempted; they enter clean and pure into that holy place, and the immediate sight and presence of God will eternally keep them so. Had we no positive revelation of the eternity of rewards and punishments, it were yet reasonable to conclude, that if the day of judgment puts an end to this world, without putting an end to good or bad men, but only translating them to a new state of happiness or misery, that their happiness or misery must last as long as that new state does, and their sentence can never be reversed without a new day of judgment: and therefore, if this be the last and final judgment, good and bad men must then enter upon an unalterable and eternal state of happiness or misery; and this is the most comfortable and most terrible consideration of all.

How will the souls of good men rejoice in God their Saviour, when they shall see themselves possessed of an eternal and unchangeable happiness ! when this mutable scene is vanished, and they have “ an abiding city, whose builder and maker is God ;” when they can look forward to eternity without fearing death, or any change or diminution of their happiness, which may increase to eternity, and be always new and fresh, but can never admit of any interruption or alloy.

But I will not pretend to describe the confusion, the distraction, the raging despair, of those wretched sinners, who shall be condemned to everlasting fire ; who see an end of all their happiness, and but the beginning of their miseries in a fired world : our thoughts cannot reach this now : we have no passions yet big enough for such a misery. Eternal torment ! Blessed JESU, have mercy upon us ! And let the present fear and dread of it preserve us from ever knowing what it means.

If you shall ask me, when the end of the world and the day of judg-

ment will come? I must confess to you I do not know; for our Saviour has before told us, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, not the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only." That we are not concerned to know when this shall be, nay, that God has very wise reasons to conceal this from us, I have showed you before: I shall now add, 1. That it is not likely to be yet. 2. That how long soever it be delayed, we have great reason at present to provide for it. Especially, 3. When we are sure that the time now hastens, after so long an expectation of it.

I. That it is not likely to be yet. In St. Paul's time some Christians were in great apprehension that the day of judgment was near, and it seems were in a terrible fright about it: but the Apostle thought fit to correct this mistake, and that with some earnestness, as if it were a mistake of ill consequence: and so indeed it might have proved, if not to them, yet to those who follow; who, observing their mistake about the day of judgment confuted, as all such mistakes are, by the event, might have concluded, that the whole was a mistake, and that there should be no day of judgment, because it did not come when it was expected; and therefore the Apostle thought fit to warn them against it: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand," 2 *Thess.* ii. 1, 2.

And to satisfy them in this, he does not undertake to tell them when the day of judgment shall be, for that he did not know; but only tells them, That "there must come a falling away first, and that Man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God." And this Man of sin not being then revealed, it was plain, that the day of judgment could not so suddenly come as they expected: and now we find by story, that it was some ages after this before the Man of sin was revealed.

After this, St. John wrote his book of the Revelations; and did we thoroughly understand that, though we should not certainly know the precise time of judgment, yet we should know how many things are still to be done before the day of judgment; for that contains an entire prophecy of the Christian church, from the beginning of it to the end of the world. And though I will not pretend to understand those mysteries, especially what is there called the thousand years' reign of Christ upon the earth, which, whatever it signifies, seems to be before the end of the world, and the final judgment; yet we certainly learn from thence, that the Man of sin must be destroyed before the last judgment; and if this be the Popish hierarchy, as I doubt not but it is, it is plain

this is not done yet, and I wish his final overthrow be so near as some learned men think it is.

But I think there is another prophesy of St. Paul himself, which has not been accomplished yet, which must receive its accomplishment before the day of judgment; and we see no prospect of its present accomplishment; I mean the conversion of the Jews, and the re-union of them to the Christian church.

This we have an account of in *Rom. xi.* which, whatever some learned men imagine, I can by no means think has received its just accomplishment by those few Jews which were converted by the preaching of the apostles, and the destruction of Jerusalem; for *ver. 15.* he tells us, "If the casting away of the Jews is the reconciling of the world," that is, if the gospel was preached to the Gentiles upon the obstinate infidelity of the Jews, "what shall the reconciling of them be, but life from the dead?" that is, the conversion of the Jews shall be a new life to the Gentile world, a new resurrection of Christianity among us. But was ever any such thing done yet? In *ver. 25, 26.* he tells them, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Now has any such thing yet been done? has all Israel, or the generality of the Jews, been converted to Christianity? And yet the Apostle assures us, this must be done by virtue of God's covenant with Abraham, "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sake," God so ordered it, that by their infidelity the gospel should be preached to the Gentile world, "yet as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake:" as the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whom God chose as his peculiar people. "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." God will never wholly reject the posterity of Abraham, whom he hath chose for his people, but will still establish his covenant with them: and that God has now rejected them for their infidelity is no argument that he will never own them again; for so he had rejected the Gentiles for their unbelief, but now he has received them into his church, upon their faith in Christ; and thus he will again graft the Jews into his church, "if they abide not still in their unbelief:" which the Apostle prophesies they shall not: *ver. 30, 31.* "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy." Now such a conversion as this of the Jews, I think, has not been yet, and therefore must be ex-

pested before the day of judgment, and the end of the world; which shows that the end of the world will not be yet; and how long it may be deferred we cannot tell.

II. How long soever the end of the world, and the day of judgment, be delayed, yet we have great reason immediately to prepare for it; for indeed this life is the only time we have to prepare for it. Death puts an end to our account for eternity; for we shall be judged according to what we have done in the body, whether it be good or bad; and the final sentence shall pass on us according to that state which death finds us in; which seems to be the reason why our Saviour warns us always to be upon our watch, "as not knowing at what hour our Lord will come;" for whatever the intermediate state be, how long soever it be between death and judgment, yet our account is the same; and to be surpris'd by death before we are provided for it is the same thing as to be surpris'd by judgment: *Mat. xxiv. 42, 43, 44.* "Watch therefore, for ye know not at what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Which, if it concern all Christians, must relate to the hour of death, as well as to the day of judgment.

And therefore flatter not yourselves that judgment is a great way off, when you know not how near death is, which will finish your account. The state of bad men is very miserable, as you have already heard, as soon as they get out of these bodies; and they are reserved for the terrible judgment of the great day; and though the day of judgment is not yet, is it not a terrible thing to be certainly reserved for it? which, how long soever it be delayed, has an eternity to follow.

III. But if the near approach of the end of the world, and the day of judgment, be considerable, it is certain that is not far off neither. The world has continued now some thousand years; and if the time of Christ and his apostles were the last days, after sixteen hundred years we must be pretty near the end of the last days: we have a nearer prospect of eternity than those had who lived some thousand years ago, at least, if they had known how long this world would have continued: but though they might not think it would have continued so long, we know now that it cannot continue much longer: there are some prophecies to be accomplished still, but how soon they may be accomplished we know not; no man questions but that the world now grows to an end, and therefore it is time for every man to think of eternity.

C H A P. III.

Who shall be our Judge, viz. The Man CHRIST JESUS.

III. **L**ET us now consider who shall be our Judge: "That man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead." Where there are two things to be considered: *First*, The person who is to judge us. *Secondly*, What assurance we have that he shall be our Judge.

First, The person who is to judge us: "That man whom he hath ordained;" that is the Man CHRIST JESUS: for thus both Christ and his apostles assure us, that God hath appointed him to be the Judge of the world: "The Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment to the Son," *John v. 22*. "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works," *Mat. xvi. 27*. Thus St. Peter assures Cornelius concerning Christ, "He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained by God to be the judge of quick and dead," *Acts x. 42*. But there is no need to multiply texts in so plain a case; it is of more concernment to inquire why Christ, who is the eternal Son of God, and a God incarnate when he is spoke of as Judge of the world, is most usually described as a Man, or the Son of man; thus, he is "that Man whom God hath ordained;" and "the Son of man;" nay, Christ himself tells us, "For this reason God hath given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man," *John v. 27*.

Now, the reason why our Saviour is described as a Man, and the Son of man, when he comes to judgment, is, because he shall visibly appear in human nature to judge the world; and therefore will be, and will appear, as much a man as he did when he dwelt on earth, though he will appear also more like a God. Thus the prophet Daniel describes it: "He saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed," *Dan. vii. 13, 14*. It is the Son of man who has this glory and kingdom given him, and which he must administer as the Son of man.

And this seems the true reason why our Saviour so often calls himself the Son of man, not as some imagine with respect to the mean cir-

cumstances of his appearance in the world; for this phrase, *the Son of man*, no where in Scripture relates to such an external meanness and poverty as distinguishes one man from another; but it either signifies no more than a man, or it respects the common weaknesses of human nature; and when this name is applied to any particular persons, it is never used of mean men, but always of princes or prophets, *Jer. xlix. 18. Job xxv. 6. Psal. lxxx. 17. Psal. cxlvi. 3. Ezek. vii. 2.* But by this title of *the Son of man* our Saviour gives us to understand that he is that great and extraordinary person, known by the name of *the Son of man* in Daniel's visions, whom God hath ordained to be the Lord and Judge of the world.

But I shall not pass over this argument thus, but shall more particularly consider the great wisdom of this; how necessary, congruous, and fitting it is, that the Son of man should judge the world; which will suggest a great many useful meditations to us. Now, I shall reduce what I have to say to these two heads: 1. That it is very fitting and necessary that the Saviour of mankind should be their Judge also. 2. And therefore, that the Man Christ Jesus, who is the Saviour of the world, should judge it.

1. That it is very fitting and necessary that the Saviour of mankind should be their Judge also; and that upon two accounts.

1. Because the authority to judge is essential to the notion and authority of a Saviour; "to save sinners," signifies "to save them from their sins;" which is the true interpretation of the name JESUS, *Mat. i. 20.* And to save them from their sins, is to deliver them from the punishment of sin; that is, from the wrath of God, from the curse of the law, from death and hell, to raise them from the dead, and to bestow immortal life on them. Now, there are several acts must concur to perfect this salvation, but the last concluding and finishing act is judgment. And he only is a complete and perfect Saviour who has authority to judge, to pardon, and to reward.

God is a holy and pure Being, and can never be reconciled to sinners till they are renewed and sanctified; which makes it necessary for the Saviour of the world to instruct mankind in their duty, and, by the power of his grace, to change their natures, and make them holy as God is, since "without holiness no man shall see God:" and therefore he must be a great prophet, and preacher of righteousness, "to turn men from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God." God is a very righteous Judge, and has threatened death against sin; and therefore the Saviour of sinners must make atonement and expiation for sin, must "deliver us from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for us;" that is, must be our priest and our sacrifice, must die for our sins, and intercede for us with God. But

all this while a sinner is not saved till he is finally acquitted and absolved; till he is actually delivered from the curse of the law, and possessed of eternal life and glory. All things else are only preparatory acts, but the final judgment perfects our salvation; for he who finally pardons, and bestows heaven on us, is our Saviour. Christ might have been our prophet, our priest, and our sacrifice, without being our Judge; but he could not have been our Saviour without it: and therefore after Christ's resurrection from the dead, after he had preached the gospel, and died upon the cross to expiate our sins; he tells his disciples, "All power is given unto me both in heaven and in earth," *Matth. xxviii.* And St. Peter tells the Sanhedrim, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," *Acts v. 31*: so that he saves by power; he is our Saviour and our Prince. And this power is the reward of his obedience and sufferings: "therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," *Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11.* His power to save is attributed to his intercession, or mediatorial kingdom: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," *Heb. vii. 25.* And, in like manner, St. Paul attributes our reconciliation to God to the death of Christ, but our salvation to his life; that is, to that power he was invested with at his resurrection from the dead: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we should be saved by his life;" that is, actually delivered from the wrath of God by the power and authority of a living Saviour, *Rom. v. 10.* Upon the same account, Christ is said "to be delivered for our offences, and to be raised again for our justification;" that is, finally to absolve and justify us at the day of judgment, *Rom. iv. 25.* For we must observe, that though Christ by his death has made a general atonement and expiation for sin, and those men are said at present to be justified who are in a justified state; (that is, who are within the terms of the covenant for justification; who are such as Christ in his gospel has promised to justify); yet, properly speaking, no man is finally justified till he is finally acquitted and absolved at the day of judgment; till he is judicially delivered from the wrath of God threatened against sin, and actually sentenced to life and glory. And if Christ cannot do this for us, whatever other benefits we receive by his ministry and death, he is not a complete and perfect Saviour; for he does not actually save

us unless he have power and authority to judge us; that is, finally to absolve us from all our sins, and to bestow heaven on us. Which shows that the Saviour of sinners must be their Judge, because we are not actually saved till we are finally judged. Moses was not a complete saviour of Israel; because though he brought them out of Egypt, yet he left them in the wilderness: but Joshua was their saviour, (and therein a type of Christ), who gave them possession of the promised land.

2. But besides the nature of the thing, that our Saviour must be our Judge; that is, must actually save us, there is very great reason it should be so; because this gives authority and efficacy to all the methods of salvation. It will make sinners afraid not to be saved by him, when they know that he must judge them.

As to shew this particularly: it will give great authority to his laws and counsels, and great credit to his promises and threatenings.

1. It will give great authority to his laws and counsels, to remember that our lawgiver will be our Judge; that he who came into the world in human nature, to declare the will of God to us, shall come again to judge us by that gospel which he preached. When God sends his prophets to us, there is great reason to reverence the authority of God in them; but much more when our Judge comes to preach to us himself; for we may be sure he will not preach in vain: the laws he preached to us at his first coming shall be the rule whereby he will judge us at his second coming.

Especially when we consider, that both our Prophet and our Judge is the Saviour of mankind. We may possibly flatter ourselves, that when God comes to judgment, he may relax somewhat of the rigour and severity of his laws; that he has reserved to himself a liberty of dispensing with our obedience to those laws, which by his prophets he commanded us to obey: but we cannot think that our Saviour would lay any unnecessary burden on us, that he would require any thing of us under the pain of damnation, but what he expects we should do; that he will dispense with the terms of the gospel, which are themselves a dispensation with the rigour of the law: for there must be an end of dispensing somewhere, unless grace can dispense away all our duty, and dispense unreformed and impenitent sinners into heaven. If this could be done, there was no reason why the Saviour of the world should have preached at all, or have given any laws to mankind, if he would have no regard to them in judging the world: but if the Judge of the world become a preacher, it concerns us diligently to hearken to him; for whether we will obey his laws or no, we shall be judged by them.

2. This gives great credit to his promises and threatenings, when they are made by our Judge himself, who has authority to execute them. Has Christ promised pardon of sin to all true penitents? Has he promised to raise our dead bodies out of the grave immortal and glorious; to bestow a crown and kingdom on us? Then we may depend on it, that he will do what he has promised; for "he who has promised is able also to perform:" he has authority to forgive sins, to raise the dead, to receive all his disciples into heaven, into the immediate presence of God, there to live and to rejoice for ever. And when he who came to save us, and has promised this great salvation to us, has power to give it; when he who has made these promises, has the disposal of life and glory, and heaven, in his own hands; this is a mighty encouragement to us, to be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as we know that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

And have not all impenitent sinners as much reason to expect that Christ will certainly execute that vengeance on them which he has threatened? that he will condemn them to eternal night and darkness, to lakes of fire and brimstone, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth for evermore? For he is the Judge of the world, who has power and authority to do it, and has declared that he will do it; and then we have reason to take his word for it.

Men are apt to shelter themselves from the terrors of the law by the merits and mediation and mercies of a Saviour. God indeed is very just and severe, a consuming fire, and who can abide his coming! but the blessed Jesus is a merciful and compassionate Saviour: he is so, infinitely merciful! But yet this merciful Saviour has threatened everlasting fire against incorrigible sinners, and he is our Judge too; and if he will condemn us at the last day, what hope is there for us? where shall we find another Saviour to deliver us? It seems he is not all mercy, as sinners are apt to flatter themselves: No; he is a Judge, and a terrible judge! And if our Saviour will judge us, it is dangerous to neglect so great salvation.

That God did not intend merely to fright sinners with his threatenings, is evident from the sufferings of our Saviour: he could not save us without making atonement and expiation for our sins. And if he must undergo the curse of the law, if he must suffer death to redeem sinners, it is certain sinners must have died if Christ had not died for them; as St. Paul argues, "If one died for all, then were all dead." For would God have laid the punishment of our sins on Christ, if he had not intended to execute the curse of the law against sinners? would he have delivered up Christ to death for us, if he had not intended that sinners should die without a sacrifice?

And when the Saviour of the world, who came to lay down his life for us, to redeem us from the curse of the law, threatens everlasting destruction against impenitent and unbelieving sinners, what reason have we to hope that he will not execute his threatenings? Those who are not redeemed by his death must die themselves; and it cannot be otherwise expected but that he who died to save us will execute the sentence of eternal death on all those who will not be saved by him. When he comes to judgment, he will remember the shame and agony, the infamy and torments, of the cross, which he underwent for sinners, and this will make him revenge the contempt of his dying and suffering love. He suffered for sin once, and though he were the Son of God, he bowed and sweated and died under the weight of it; but all this is despised by sinners, and goes for nothing. And now he will die no more for them, but they shall die for themselves, shall feel the weight of God's wrath themselves, shall sweat and groan and die under it to eternity.

II. It is very fitting and congruous, that the Man Christ Jesus, who is the Saviour, should be the Judge of the world, and that upon three accounts: 1. This is a very fitting reward of his humiliation and sufferings. 2. It gives great advantage to the future judgment, that the Son of man is the Judge of mankind. 3. It adds to the glory and triumph and terror of that day to have a visible judge.

1. The glory and authority of a judge is a very proper and fitting reward of Christ's humiliation and sufferings: he became man to save mankind; "though he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," *Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.*

This was a very low condescension for the Son of God, to conceal his eternal majesty under so mean a disguise of flesh and blood, to become man as we are, to submit to all the weaknesses and infirmities of human nature, to chuse a low and mean fortune, to be treated with contempt and infamy, and to die a painful and accursed death upon the cross. All this he submitted to, in obedience to his Father's will, for the redemption of mankind: but it was not fitting this Son of righteousness should always lie under an eclipse; he must break forth at last with a new and surprising glory; the world must see what a great and excellent person he was, who came to visit them in great humility; who "took upon him the form of a servant," and was "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief:" and therefore "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every

"knee should bow, both of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," *ver. 10, 11.* Christ is now exalted to the right hand of God, as a reward of his humiliation and sufferings, and appears in the true glory of an incarnate God; but his glory is now visible only to the blessed inhabitants of heaven: those who despised him, persecuted him, spit on him, and nailed him to the cross; those who in all ages since have derided the crucified Jesus, and scorned his religion and worship, see nothing of his glory: but when he comes to judge the world, then his glory and power shall be visible to all: this will put an end to the reproach of the cross, and turn it into surprise and wonder, when they shall see what a glorious person he is who submitted to so infamous a death.

When he came into the world he appeared as other men do, as mean as the meanest men, clothed with a mortal body of flesh and blood, without any external splendour of birth or fortune to recommend him; but when this Son of man shall return again to judge the world, his external appearance will then be glorious, so bright and transplendent that he will eclipse the sun, as the sun does the lesser lights of heaven: then God will be as visible in him as man was on earth, and shine through human nature as the soul does through the body; that an incarnate God will be as visible as a man. Human nature will no longer veil and conceal the glory of the Godhead, but shall bear all the visible impressions of the Deity, and appear with the awful majesty of God. And this is a proper reward for his mean appearance on earth; for when God becomes man, though there may be wise reasons why he should conceal himself in human nature for a while, yet it cannot and ought not to be always so; but if God becomes man, he will at one time or other make his glory visible to all the world in human nature.

It was a low and vile submission for the Son of God to be arraigned as a malefactor before Pontius Pilate; to be falsely accused, unjustly condemned, made a mock king, buffeted, scourged, reviled with the most bitter and insulting scorn, and nailed upon the cross betwixt two thieves: but the scene will be changed when he comes to judge the world, when his crown of thorns shall be bright rays of glory, when the wound in his side, and the print of the nails in his hands and feet shall be springs and fountains of light, when his cross shall be turned into a triumphant chariot and throne of judgment; and his judge and accusers, and all the enemies and despisers of his cross, shall stand trembling before him. This is the triumph of the crucified Jesus, this is the reward of his infamy and death; and a proper reward it is, to make him the Judge of the world, who was judged and condemned himself by sinners.

The firm belief and persuasion of this now, that God has made him the Judge both of the quick and dead, takes away the shame of the cross: let who dare mock at it, we do not blush to own ourselves the worshippers of the crucified Jesus, "who suffered under Pontius Pilate, " was crucified, dead and buried; for him God raised from the dead, " and hath made him both Lord and Christ." We can read the history of his arraignment and condemnation without taking offence at his sufferings, though a Christ crucified was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness;" because, by an eye of faith, we now see him advanced to the right hand of God, clothed with majesty and power, and expect shortly to see him come again in the clouds of heaven to judge the world. Thus the primitive Christians defended themselves against the reproaches of Jews and Heathens; and thus we may to this day defend ourselves against the scoffs of Atheists and infidels: for a crucified Jesus will appear a very glorious prince when he comes to judge the world. It is very fitting, as you heard before, that the Saviour of mankind should be the Judge of the world; and it made it reasonable for our Saviour to submit to such an ignominious death for the salvation of mankind; when the ignominy of the cross should be rewarded and done away by the glory and triumph of the last judgment. And therefore the Apostle tells us, that, "for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down on the right hand of God," *Heb. xii. 2.*

2. It gives great advantage to the future judgment, that the Son of man shall judge the world; he who became man, that he might be the Saviour of mankind: for the very appearance of the Son of man to judge the world will convince all men of the justice, equity, and compassion, of the last judgment; and then God will be glorified in judging the world, when men and angels shall see and acknowledge the justice and equity of it. Now,

1. What could mankind have desired more, had they had the choice of their own judge, than to be judged by a man? by a just, and good, and compassionate man? It is a formidable thing to be judged by God, who is a pure and holy being; and who so holy that he dares appear before his tribunal? "He chargeth his angels with folly, and the heavens are not clean in his sight." But we are apt to expect a more favourable judgment from a man who has a kindness for human nature; who is sensible of the follies, temptations, and infirmities of it; who will not judge us as if we were angels or unbodied spirits, but will remember that we are men, that we are the race of apostate man; that we have a corrupt nature within, a tempting world and a tempting devil without.

If this then will satisfy us, God has appointed a man for our judge;

one who is our brother; "flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone;" one who has suffered, and has been tempted as we are; who has lived in the midst of a wicked world, and knows the conversation of mankind, how easily men are turned aside by example and persuasion, and interest, by fears and flatteries; and has a great pity for the weaknesses of men, and will make all favourable allowances for them.

Nay, more than this; we have not only a man, but God-man, for our Judge; a God personally united to human nature. All mankind have a great persuasion of God's goodness, that the kindest and most compassionate man in the world falls infinitely short of the goodness of God; but they are afraid of his holiness and of his justice; that these attributes will not suffer him to make sufficient allowances for the weakness of human nature. On the other hand; though men know enough to pity each others' infirmities, yet they are not always the most favourable judges to one another; in reason it should be so, that those who are exposed to the same temptations themselves, who feel the weaknesses and infirmities of human nature, should pity those who are overcome by them; but it is not always so; and therefore we cannot always rely on it: but when God becomes man, we have all the goodness of God, and all the tender compassion of a man, in their utmost perfection; that when God-man is our Judge, if either God or man can help us, we are safe: no man need be afraid of such a judge, who has not outsinned the mercies of a God, and the tender compassions of a man; and he who has must perish, and the most merciful man must vindicate the justice of God in it.

Especially, 2. When we remember that this Man is the Saviour of mankind: he who is our Judge became man, that he might be our Saviour; and can we desire a more equal and favourable Judge than the Saviour of mankind? We may be sure he has all the kindness for us that we can desire: it was a mighty love to human nature which brought him from heaven, and clothed him with flesh and blood, and exposed him to all the miseries and sufferings of this life for our sakes; and when he died and suffered all this for us, can we suspect he will be a severe and unequal Judge? that he who died for sinners will condemn any sinners whom he can save? Has he then forgot his agony and bloody sweat, his cross and passion? has he forgot the love which brought him into the world, and which nailed him to the cross, for the salvation of sinners? We need not doubt but the Saviour of mankind is more strongly inclined to save than to destroy: than to destroy, did I say? far be it from the great Lover of souls that he should have any inclination to destroy: this is foreign to his design, this is against his will, this is a force upon his nature and government; he is incarnate and embodied Love; mercy is the temper and complexion, the

glory and triumph, of his kingdom, and therefore, none shall eternally perish but those whom infinite and incarnate Love cannot save.

For we must remember, that he has now purchased us with his own blood, that he has an interest in us, that every sinner he condemns he pronounces sentence against himself; he rejects what might have been, and what he passionately desired should have been, his own; and therefore we may be certain he will condemn none whom, according to the most favourable construction of the terms of the gospel, he can save: I say, we may be as certain of this as we are, (to allude to some parables of our Saviour), that a man who has travelled into the wilderness to find a lost sheep will bring it home upon his back rejoicing, and not leave it to perish there when he has found it; or that a woman, who sought diligently for her lost groat, and rejoiced at the finding of it, will not immediately fling it away again; or that a father, who has received his prodigal son with all the festival expressions of joy, will not immediately turn him out of his family to seek his fortune: no; Christ has shed his blood for us all, and the more he saves the greater reward he has of his suffering, the more numerous his train and retinue of redeemed souls is, and numbers add to the glory of the triumph: this may convince all mankind how merciful our Judge will be; and if we must be judged at all, could God do more for us than to appoint the Man Christ Jesus, who is our Saviour, to be our Judge?

But then consider, on the other hand, what a terrible thing it will be to be condemned by the Man Christ Jesus, the Saviour of the world! what tumults and convulsions of thoughts must such sinners labour under! they must be self-condemned; they must feel all the agonies of guilt and despair: for if they could reasonably excuse themselves, or the most merciful man in the world could excuse them, their Judge would excuse them too. I know not how to bear the thoughts of this; the very imagination of it amazes and confounds me! To be damned is a tolerable punishment in comparison of being damned by the Saviour of the world. And might I have been saved, will such a sinner say? Did my Saviour, who is now my Judge, a terrible Judge, shed his blood for me? did he purchase heaven for me? and does he now condemn me to hell, and deservedly too, against his own inclination, though he lose the purchase of his blood by it? O wretch that I am! might I have been saved? and must I be damned? and damned by the Saviour of the world! what fury and passion will accompany these thoughts is not to be expressed in words; and I pray God none of us may ever feel it.

3. Another thing which made it so fitting and congruous that the Son of man shall judge the world is, that he will be a visible judge.

It is very fitting the world should be visibly judged, for without this, all the pomp and triumph of judgment, nay, some of the principal ends of judgment, are lost. God judges the world in so public a manner, to convince the world of his power, and justice, and goodness, in the final destruction of all bad men, and in the final rewards of virtue; and, therefore, this must be a visible judgment, and then there must be a visible judgment-seat, and a visible judge, a visible glory and power. Bad men must know for what they are judged, and see the hand that executes vengeance on them; or, for ought I know, they might go Atheists and infidels to hell; and see no more of God in a fired world than they do in plague, or sword, or famine, or such other judgments as God sends upon the earth: they might curse their hard fate, but neither accuse themselves, nor own the divine power and justice; and could they sink into hell without owning the being and justice of God, or acknowledging their own guilt and deserts, and accusing themselves as the authors of their own misery and destruction, God would lose the glory of his justice and power, and hell itself would be a very tolerable place to sinners: there would be a fire there to burn them, but no worm to gnaw their consciences, no inward furies to torment them. The justice of the last judgment, which will stop the mouths of sinners, and make them confess their own guilt and deserts, will make the flames of hell so furiously rage and devour.

So that it is necessary that the last judgment should be executed by a visible judge, that it may not be thought the effect of chance and accident or fate, but the result of the Divine wisdom and counsel; that the world may see and know that God is come to judge them, and to take vengeance on all the workers of iniquity; and this also makes the Son of man a very proper judge of mankind, because he is a visible God, and can appear in a visible glory, and as visibly judge the world as an earthly prince or judge, when he ascends the judgment-seat.

This will be the glory of that day, to see the visible appearance of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, attended with myriads of angels to his throne of glory, where he sits encircled with the heavenly host, and all mankind standing before his tribunal, expecting their final doom from his mouth. Good Lord! how will such a sight as this affect us! could we but paint a lively image and representation of judgment upon our fancies, how would it warm our hearts! how would it disparage all the pompous pageantry of this world! how would it revive the spirits of good men, inspire them with courage and resolution, with zeal and activity, in serving Christ; "Looking for that blessed hope, and glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ!" What terror would the thoughts of it

strike into sinners! how would it cool the heat of lust! how would it make their countenance change, and loosen the joints of their loins, and make their knees knock one against another, like the hand-writing upon the wall, while they are carousing in their full bowls, and drinking away the thoughts of God and judgment!

Who can possibly conceive the joy and exultation of that day, when good men shall see their Lord coming in the clouds of heaven, clothed with a human body, but bright and glorious as the sun; a body which still retains the marks of his sufferings, and the tokens of his love!

How will it transport us to see him whom our soul loveth! to see him whom we have so passionately longed and desired to see! to see him whom we love, though we have not seen him! to see him, I say, not as the shepherds did, a poor helpless infant, wrapped in swaddling-clouts, and lying in a manger; to see him, not arraigned for a malefactor, nor hanging in a shameful manner upon the cross; but to see him in all his majesty and glory, to see him a triumphant Conqueror and Judge, to see him with crowns and laurels in his hands, and in him to see the certainty of our faith, the completion of our hopes, the rewards of our patience and sufferings, and our final conquest over death and hell! O joyful day, when this royal Bridegroom shall come in the glory of his Father, to meet his spouse the Church, to conduct her to his Father's house, there to see, and there to partake in his glory, and never to part more.

Methinks I see holy and devout souls in the highest raptures and ecstasies of joy, embracing and comforting one another at the appearance of their Lord: Here comes the blessed Jesus, it is he himself, the true image of God, the very brightness of his Father's glory! This is that blessed day we have so long expected and hoped for; let us go forth and meet him, let us hasten into the embraces of our Saviour: he is come to judgment, but let those tremble at judgment who are afraid of the Judge; we are his, he has bought us with his blood, he has renewed and sanctified us by his Spirit, and now he is come to own us in the presence of men and angels, to bestow a kingdom on us, to receive us to himself, that where he is we may be also, and behold his glory.

But then, on the other hand, consider, I beseech you, what a terrible sight this will be to bad men, who have laughed at the fable of a crucified Jesus, and mocked at a future judgment: And is he come? will such a sinner say, and must I be judged at last, when I thought myself so secure of judgment? Behold, I see him, and can be an infidel no longer! Lord, what terror is there in his looks! how do his eyes flame with vengeance! who can abide the day of his wrath! how can I appear before him as my Judge, whom I would not have for my

Saviour! what account can I give of my actions, who never expected to be called to an account for them? what plea can I make for myself, who would never believe, who would never be persuaded? How shall I bear his presence, and yet whither can I fly from him? When he condemns me, to whom can I appeal from the Judge and the Saviour of the world! O wretch that I am! who would never believe, never think of this day, and now I must be condemned by the Saviour of the world!

Let these thoughts then make a deep impression upon our minds before that day comes; let us remember that the Son of man will be our Judge, he who laid down his life for us, he who now invites us to repentance, he who now promises pardon and forgiveness to true penitents: let this teach us to reverence his laws, to imitate his example, to put our whole trust and confidence in his merits and intercession: "that when he cometh again in his glorious majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise with him unto life immortal;" as our church teaches us to pray.

Secondly, Let us now consider what assurance we have that the Man Christ Jesus shall be the Judge of the world: and of this St. Paul tells us, "that God hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

But you will say, how does the resurrection of Christ from the dead prove that he is made the Judge of the world? For that any man rises from the dead does not prove that he is judge of the world. We shall all rise again at the last day; but not to judge, but to be judged. This is very true; and therefore if we knew no more of Christ but only that he rose again from the dead, this would not prove him to be the Judge of the world.

But we must consider, 1. That the resurrection of Christ is a great and irresistible proof of his doctrine which he preached. This our Saviour himself appeals to, as the last proof of his divine authority; "Destroy this temple, and in three days will I raise it up." And thus his resurrection from the dead proves that he is the Judge of the world; for this he expressly taught his disciples, that God had "committed all judgment into his hands. That the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then shall he reward every man according to his works." So that our Saviour plainly declared, that God had made him the Judge of the world; and God has confirmed his testimony, by raising him from the dead.

2. We must consider also, that the resurrection of Christ was his visible advancement into his kingdom: then his kingdom began, when he rose from the dead; then "all power was committed to him, both in heaven, and in earth," *Matth. xxviii.* And that God has thus

advanced him was visible to all men in the effusion of the Holy Spirit on the apostles on the day of Pentecost, and in those wonderful miracles which they wrought in his name. Thus St. Peter tells the Jews, that the miraculous effusion of the Spirit was a visible proof that God had advanced Christ into his kingdom; *Acts* ii. 33. "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye know, see, and hear." And from hence concludes, *ver.* 36. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Thus, upon occasion of the miracles the apostles wrought, when they were forbid to preach in his name, St. Peter tells the Sanhedrim, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree: him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins: and we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him," *Acts* v. 30, 31. So that when Christ rose again, he took possession of his kingdom; and "he must reign till he hath put down all enemies under his feet;" that is, till he hath judged the world, finally condemned all bad men, and rewarded his faithful disciples; and then he shall give up the kingdom again to his Father, that God may be all in all; *1 Cor.* xv.

But besides this, there are two visible effects of the resurrection of Christ, which are plain presages and preludiums to a future judgment; the destruction of the Jewish nation and policy, and the destruction of the kingdom of darkness.

1. The destruction of the Jews for their great sin in crucifying their Messiah. This Christ foretold he would do: this is the meaning of that parable of the nobleman, "who went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. — But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And when he returned, he said, But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me," *Luke* xix. 12, 14, 27. And therefore, when Christ had foretold the destruction of the temple, and his disciples asked him, "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" our Saviour intermixes the prophesy of the destruction of Jerusalem, the fate of the Jewish nation, and the last judgment, for the end of the world; the destruction of the Jewish nation being the beginning, and the presage, of a future judgment; *Matth.* xxiv. This was a visible act of his

justice and power, and a fair warning to the world, what all the enemies of Christ's kingdom must expect.

2. The overthrow of the devil's kingdom in the world is another preface of a future judgment. When Christ appeared, the devil had his kingdom in this world; was the god of this world, and was worshipped with divine honours; and St. John tells us, "For this end the Son of God was manifested, to destroy the works of the devil," 1 *John* iii. 8.; and Christ tells us, that the Holy Ghost, whom he would send upon his apostles after his resurrection from the dead, "should convince the world of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged," *John* xvi. 8, 11. Where, by judgment, I understand the final judgment, which the Spirit should convince the world of, by that visible judgment he would execute upon the prince of this world. For by the preaching of the gospel he turned men from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God; converted great part of the Heathen world, silenced their oracles, and exposed their gods and their worship, their temples and their altars, to contempt.

This was a visible judgment of the prince of this world. And have not bad men reason to look about them, when they see their prince and captain so miserably defeated? If Christ have already begun to execute judgment on the prince of this world, is not this a plain forerunner of the final judgment, when the devil and his angels, and all bad men, shall be condemned to eternal fire?

This assurance we have, that the Son of man shall judge the world, that God hath raised him from the dead, and thereby confirmed that testimony which he gave of himself, advanced him to the right hand of power; and has already given some sensible proofs of his power and justice, in the overthrow of the Jewish nation, and the devil's kingdom.

I shall only farther observe, that this sensible proof we have that Christ should judge the world is a sensible proof of a future judgment. As certain as we are that Christ is risen from the dead, so certain we are of a future judgment: which is an abundant confirmation of all those other arguments from reason and Scripture that God will judge the world.

C H A P. IV.

The manner and circumstances of Christ's appearance, and the awful solemnities of Judgment.

IV. **L**ET us now consider the manner and circumstances of Christ's appearance, and the awful solemnities of judgment. I have, upon several occasions, hinted at most of these things already; but the

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order of my discourse requires that I should say something particularly, though briefly, to them.

Now, our Saviour tells us, *Matth.* xvi. 27. "That the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels." *Luke* ix. 26. "That the Son of man shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.—That the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire; taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 *Theff.* i. 7, 8. "That the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God;" which shall awaken the dead, and raise them out of their graves: "but the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive," (that is, whoever then shall be alive at Christ's coming to judgment,) "shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord," 1 *Theff.* iv. 16, 17. That "when the Son of man cometh in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats," *Matth.* xxv. 31, 32.; or as it is described in St. John's visions, *Rev.* xx. 11, 12, 13. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was no place found for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." This gives us a general prospect of the order and solemnity of the last judgment, which is very pompous and glorious, and very terrible: there never was any thing like it. All the Roman triumphs, in comparison with this, were but like the sports and apish imitations of children. Let us then particularly, but briefly, consider the several parts of it.

Christ shall come "in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."

In his own glory: that must signify the glory of his person; that is, the glory of an incarnate God. His body will be bright and glorious as the sun. So it was when he was transfigured before them on the mount; "His face did shine like the sun, and his raiment was white as the light," *Matth.* xvii. 2. And if there be any new degrees of glory and majesty, we may be sure he will appear in it all when he comes to judgment. The Scripture assures us, that Christ is now clothed with a glorious body; and that, at the resurrection, "he shall change our vile bodies, that they may be like to his own most glo-

“ rious body,” *Phil.* iii. 12. And he himself tells us, “ At that day, “ the righteous shall shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their “ Father,” *Mat.* xiii. 43. And if he bestows such glory on his meanest members, how glorious will the Head be? for St. Paul assures us, that there are very different degrees of glory; “ There is one glory of “ the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the “ stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is “ the resurrection of the dead,” *1 Cor.* xv. 41, 42. With what glory then will our Lord appear when he comes to judgment? If the righteous shall shine forth like the sun, how bright will the Sun of righteousness himself be? If mere creatures shall appear so glorious; what will the glory of an incarnate God be? For he will not then appear as a glorious creature, but as a visible God: as I observed before, his Godhead will shine through the glorified humanity as visible as our souls do through our bodies. And how glorious must that body be in which the Deity appears! a glory which distinguishes a God from the most glorious creatures!

But he must appear in the *glory of his Father* also; that is, as I understand it, with the authority of an universal Judge. This is a great glory; for authority and power carries reverence and majesty with it. Whatever men’s personal qualifications are, though upon all other accounts they are much inferior to their neighbours, yet the character of a judge makes them venerable, especially to those who must be judged by them. Authority is an invisible character, but yet gives a visible majesty: it is apt to impose upon our judgments of persons, that we hardly think them the same men when they are in authority and out of it. And if an ordinary judge of assize be looked on with so much reverence and awe, what is the glory and majesty of an universal Judge? How will all the world fall and bow and tremble before him, who, with the word of his mouth, can sentence them to eternal life or death? This is *his Father’s glory*; for he is the natural Lord and Judge of the world, and from him he receives this authority to judge the world: “ The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to “ the Son, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour “ the Father,” *John* v. 22, 23. To this glory he is now advanced, and we must now obey and reverence and adore him as our Judge: but it will give a visible majesty to him, when he thus comes in the glory of his Father; when the astonishing glory of his person is still made more glorious and majestic by the authority of a judge.

But his retinue is very glorious also, and adds to the terror and majesty of his appearance; for he shall come attended with myriads of holy angels, bright and glorious beings, who encircle his person, and are the witnesses and ministers of his justice.

We know a splendid retinue adds greatly to the glory of a prince or judge: a multitude has something great and awful in it, especially when this multitude are all his dependents, servants, and ministers; and more still, when every one of this multitude are most excellent and glorious creatures, the beauty and perfection of the creation, whose single glories we cannot now bear the sight of without great apprehension and amazement. And what a mighty Prince is he, who comes attended with the whole host of heaven, who leave their heavenly mansions to wait upon their Lord, and to adorn his triumphs!

But this glorious retinue of angels is not merely for pomp and state, but they are the ministers of his justice, and therefore are called his *mighty angels*, or, the angels of his power, *2 Theff. i. 7*. And what a powerful Judge is he, who has all the powers of heaven attending him, to execute his vengeance on men and devils.

This glorious Judge shall, at the last day, come down, *μετ' ἀγγέλων δυναμικῶς ἔρχεται*, from heaven, for thither he ascended after his resurrection from the dead, and there he must continue till he comes to judge the world: but then “the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God,” *1 Theff. iv. 16*. I see no reason why this should not be understood literally of an audible voice and shouting, and an audible sound of the last trumpet to summon all mankind to judgment; for this makes the appearance more solemn and awful; and thus God descended on Mount Sinai, when he gave the law, “with thunderings and lightnings, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that was in the camp trembled,” *Exod. xix. 16*. And if he gave the law with the sound of a trumpet, why not judge the world with it too?

This shout is the shouting of the holy angels, begun by the voice of the archangel, in their descent with Christ; and signifies what such shoutings do among men, either great joy and exultation, or alacrity and courage: thus men shout for joy when any thing happens which highly pleases them; thus soldiers shout when the signal is given for battle.

Thus, when our Lord shall say, Come, ye holy angels, go down with me to judge the world; they will shout for joy that that day is come, which will put a final end to the kingdom of darkness, when the devil and his angels, and all wicked men, shall be cast into the lake of fire, and good men rewarded and crowned, and received into the immediate presence of God in heaven. For this is matter of joy to all holy angels, to see the final conquest of all the enemies of CHRIST's kingdom, to see the triumphs of justice, to see all impiety and wickedness shamed, condemned, and punished, and the world cleansed from the pollutions of it: to see their numbers increased by the advancement of

good men into heaven, who will now be united to their company, and join with them in singing hallelujahs to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb: for if there be joy in heaven at the repentance of one sinner, what exultation and acclamation will there be to see the whole number of God's elect raised again with glorious bodies, and receive that kingdom which was prepared for them before the foundations of the world!

When our Lord shall say, Come, ye holy angels, and be the ministers of my justice, and execute my vengeance upon a wicked world, upon the devil and all bad men, and gather together mine elect from the four corners of the earth, with what shoutings will they receive their commission? with what alacrity and courage will they execute it? For so our Saviour himself represents it, that the angels are not merely attendants of state, but his officers and ministers whom he employs in judging the world. Thus he expounds the parable of the tares, *Mat. xiii. 41, 42, 43*. "He that soweth the good seed, is the Son of man: the field is the world: the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one: the enemy that sowed them is the devil: the harvest is the end of the world: and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather forth out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father." And thus he expounds the parable of the net, "that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind; which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, and the bad they cast away. So shall it be at the end of the world; the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth," *ver. 47,—50*.

What is meant by *the trump of God*, with which Christ descends from heaven, is hard to say; only thus much we know, that it is such a trumpet at the sound of which the dead shall rise: as St. Paul expressly tells us, *1 Cor. xv. 51, 52*. "Behold I shew you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; (for the trumpet shall sound), and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." And therefore this last trump seems to be what our Saviour calls "the voice of the Son of God;" *John v. 25, 28, 29*. Verily, verily, I say unto you, "the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice

“ of the Son of God ; and they that hear shall live.” Which may indeed be understood of a metaphorical or spiritual death and resurrection, that those who were dead in sin should be raised to a new spiritual life, by hearing the voice of the Son of God, and believing on him: but though our Saviour might intend this sense, yet that he meant somewhat more by it, appears from what follows: “ Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.” So that the voice of Christ shall raise the dead, which may well be called *the trump of God*, when it shall sound through all the world, and give a new life to the dead, and summon them to judgment.

For this is another very material circumstance of the future judgment, that all the dead, both good and bad, shall be raised to life again, and appear before the judgment-seat of Christ: that as we must give an account of whatever we have done in this body, whether good or bad, so we must re-assume our bodies again when we come to judgment. I shall not now discourse to you of the nature or possibility of the resurrection, which belongs to another argument; but the Man Christ Jesus is the Judge of mankind, he appears in human nature himself, clothed with an human body, though infinitely bright and glorious; and he comes to judge men, not unbodied souls, and therefore we must be re-united to our bodies again; for a human soul is not a perfect man without its body. An unbodied soul is guilty of none of those sins for which we must be judged, for we must be judged for what we did in the body: the man sinned, and the man must be judged, and the man must be either happy or miserable for ever.

Lord! with what horror and reluctance will bad souls enter into their bodies again; not to enjoy their old beloved sensualities, but to be judged for them! When the very sight of their bodies shall call to mind all the villainies they acted in them; when they must appear before their Judge with all the instruments of wickedness about them, with those very bodies “ whose members they had made servants of uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity:” with eyes full of adultery, with hands stained with blood, or full of bribes or rapine, with a blaspheming, a lying, a reviling, a perjured tongue; to unite a soul to such a body again is like tying a man to his murdered friend, which will both scare and torment his conscience, and poison him with a noisome stench. The body, which was the tempter and the instrument in all this wickedness, will now be a witness against him, and an instrument of his punishment too.

But holy souls will give a better welcome to their bodies, bodies in

which the flesh was subdued to the Spirit; which were preserved pure and clean from all sensual lusts, which were the ready instruments of righteousness and virtue, which were offered up living, holy, and acceptable sacrifices to God, which suffered loss and want, and torment and death, for the sake of Christ. Good men would desire to be judged in such bodies as these, which are visible testimonies of their faith and patience, and mortification and self-denial, which are the members of Christ, and the temples of the Holy Ghost.

Thus all mankind shall rise out of their graves, and appear before the judgment-seat of Christ: and therefore now let us contemplate our Lord sitting upon his throne, the throne of judgment, as he himself tells us, *Mat. xxv. 31*. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." Thus it is described in the Revelations of St. John, *chap. xx. 11*. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them." What this throne is, or where it shall be placed, we are not told; but the most probable conjecture is, that this throne is a bright resplendent cloud, in the form of a magnificent throne, placed in the air at some distance from the earth; for he is said to come in the clouds of heaven; and St. Paul plainly intimates to us that his throne shall be in the air, when he tells us, that those good men who shall be alive at Christ's coming, "shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air;" and it is not improbable but this may be near Jerusalem, where the temple of God was, where he conversed while he lived on earth, and where he was judged and condemned as a malefactor, and treated with the utmost scorn and contempt, and nailed in an infamous manner upon the cross. For it seems to add to the triumph of that day to appear in all his glory to judge the world at that very place where he suffered shame, and reproach, and death, for the sins of men, and from the hands of sinners. But this is all conjecture, (though not without some appearing probability), and therefore I shall build nothing on it.

The Judge being sat, all mankind appear before him, to give an account of their actions, and to receive their final sentence; "Before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats," *Mat. xxv. 32*. This, as I observed before, our Saviour attributes to the ministry of angels, who separate the wheat from the tares, and the good fish from the bad; for the angels, we know, "are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who should be heirs of salvation," *Heb. i. 14*. And therefore they know how to distinguish between good and bad men, and to separate them from each other.

This is the last and final separation: good and bad men shall never meet and intermix with each other after this: they live together in this world, and converse together, are united by relation and interest; are members of the same church, and worship God together in the same holy communion of prayers and sacraments; but they must part company at the day of judgment, the one to the right hand, and the other to the left. Men are very apt to flatter themselves now, that they shall fare the better for the company they keep; no church and no communion is pure enough for them: not that they are so much holier than their neighbours, but they are of opinion that God will judge of them by the church they are of; and therefore, whatever church strikes their fancy most with an appearance of sanctity and holiness, there they join themselves, not so much to be made better by their company, as to escape the better with them: but they should remember, that the tares and the wheat grow together in the same field, but yet have a very different end; the one is gathered into the barn, and the other is burnt; and that good and bad fish are taken in the same net, but they are separated at the day of judgment. All our separations now will avail us nothing, unless we take care to be found in the number of Christ's sheep when we come to judgment; for if we be concealed hypocrites, and rotten and corrupt members of a sound and orthodox and pure church, though we have conversed with good men all our lives here, yet we must part company at last; "the angels at that day will gather forth out of Christ's kingdom and church all things which offend and work iniquity."

The Judge, being thus seated on his throne and all mankind before him, the books are opened; which is another circumstance to be considered in the last judgment; *Rev. xx. 12.* "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." The like we have *Dan. vii. 10.*

This opening of the books seems to be an allusion to the form of process in human judicature; for we cannot think that God keeps books of record in a literal sense, as men do; for such books are only helps to memory, and therefore God needs them not: but this represents to us the exact and impartial justice of the last judgment; for there are two sorts of books which shall be opened, and out of which we shall be judged: 1. The laws of God, which are the rule of our actions by which we shall be judged. 2. The records of our lives and actions, which contain the matters of fact, or that for which we shall be judged. I shall discourse more particularly of this hereafter, and shall only observe at present, that God is a curious observer of all our

actions, and keeps a faithful record of them. Though we take little notice of our sins ourselves, and forget them presently, and then think they are gone and past, yet God remembers them; we shall find fair and fresh records of them when we come to judgment. And how will it amaze and confound bad men to see all the sins of their lives called to remembrance, to see a black catalogue of all their impieties and blasphemies, injustice and oppression, uncleanness and impurities; to see an exact counterpart of a most wicked and ungodly life! Nothing can blot our sins out of God's book but a sincere repentance and reformation of our lives: for then God has promised "to blot out all "our iniquities," which is somewhat more than crossing the account; for when the account is only crossed it is visible still; but what is blotted out do not so much as appear; it no longer stands upon record, it is forgot, and shall never be alleged against us; there shall be no mention made of it at the day of judgment: for St. John tell us, there is another book shall be opened, the book of life, out of which good men shall be judged, which records their faith, and patience, and charity, and all the good they have done; but none of their sins, which God has blotted out of his remembrance, and has promised to keep no record of them. And is not this a mighty encouragement to true repentance, that all our sins shall be blotted out before the day of judgment; that there shall be no mention, no remembrance, of them then?

Some very good men have been guilty of very great wickednesses, which, it may be, none but God and their own consciences know; and the best men have so many failings, weaknesses, miscarriages, that should all the sins of good men be exposed to the view and censure of men and angels at the day of judgment, though they were finally absolved and acquitted, yet it would cause great shame and confusion, and overcast the glory of that day; but their sins are done away and forgot, and they have washed their garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. This is the only way to conceal your most secret sins, to blot them out of God's book by repentance; for if they remain there upon record, how successful soever you may be in concealing them at present, the books will be opened at the day of judgment, and then all the world will know them.

Thus, in our Saviour's account of the last judgment, none of the sins which good men ever committed are mentioned, but only the graces and virtues for which they are rewarded; nor is there any notice taken of any good actions done by bad men, but only of their sins, *Mat. xxv.* as God expressly declares it shall be, *Ezek. xxxiii. 13, 14, 16.* "When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he "trust to his own righteousness," *i. e.* to the good he hath already done, "and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered;

“but for his iniquity that he hath committed he shall die for it.
 “Again, when I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn
 “from his sin, and doth that which is lawful and right,—none of
 “his sins that he hath committed, shall be mentioned unto him; he
 “hath done that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live.”

And now, let us consider in what order Christ will judge the world. When he has separated between the sheep and the goats, between good and bad men; he first calls good men to judgment, and pronounces them blessed, as we see *Mat. xxv.* And this very much becomes the person of our Judge, who is the Saviour of the world; and therefore to save is his proper work, and must take place of all acts of justice and vengeance. The Saviour of the world, as I observed before, must be our Judge, that he may be a complete and perfect Saviour; that he may finally acquit and reward us. And therefore this is his first care, to separate his elect from the company, and to deliver them from the destruction, of the ungodly.

This demonstrates to all the world that God takes more pleasure to save than to destroy: this convinces sinners that their destruction is from themselves; that they might have been saved as well as others, for Christ came to save them; and they see now that he would have done it, would they have been saved by him. In the glory which is conferred on good men, they see what they have lost before they hear that terrible sentence pronounced, “Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire:” And this is a double damnation, to see the happiness of good men, and to feel their own misery. For when we come to judgment, to lose heaven will be thought a terrible punishment, even though there were no hell: and this punishment bad men have, by being suffered to stand by, and see the glorious rewards of the righteous.

But there is a further reason also for this: that good men, when they are acquitted and absolved, shall, together with their Lord, sit in judgment on the wicked world. *1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.* “Do ye not know
 “that the saints shall judge the world?—Know ye not that we shall
 “judge angels?” How far this extends we know not; but it seems such a thing there is, as was universally believed in the Apostle’s days; as appears from his appeal to their own knowledge of it: but if they must judge the world, it is reasonable to think that their own judgment must be over first.

I shall name but one thing more, which I have had several occasions to take notice of already; and that is, that at the last judgment this earth shall be destroyed with fire, as St. Peter expressly tells us; “The day of the Lord shall come like a thief in the night; in the
 “which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works

CONCERNING A FUTURE JUDGMENT.

"that are therein, shall be burnt up," 2 *Pet.* iii. 10. This has been an old tradition, that the world should be destroyed by fire; and some men are very curious and inquisitive by what natural causes this may be done: for they are not willing to allow that God either made or destroys the world by an immediate power; for the less they leave for God to do the less they are concerned about him. But though it is hard to persuade some men now that there was any need of a God to make the world, which they think could make itself without him, yet the last judgment shall convince them that it is God that destroys it, when they shall see the world fired by a flame streaming from his throne; as is not improbable, by the description of the prophet Daniel: "A fiery stream issued, and came forth from before him," *Dan.* vii. 10.

The only question is, Whether the world shall be fired at Christ's first appearance to judgment, or after the final sentence pronounced against bad men? The first does not seem probable; because Christ himself shall place his throne in the air, and all mankind shall be gathered before him to judgment; and a fired world is not a proper scene for such an appearance; and the burning of the world seems to be an act of judgment and vengeance, as St. Paul tells us, "He shall descend from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God," 2 *Thess.* i. 8. So that the devil and bad men shall first be condemned to everlasting fire, and then their punishment shall begin in a fired world.

Thus I have given you a brief view of the circumstances and manner of Christ's appearance, and the awful solemnities of judgment; every part of which is for the glory of our Lord, for the comfort of good men, and a terror to the wicked. God grant we may to think of this day beforehand, that we may not feel the terror and astonishment of it when it comes.

C H A P. V.

Who are to be judged, viz. The world, or all mankind.

V. **L**ET us now consider who are to be judged; and they are the world, or all mankind: for I shall take no notice of the judgment of the devil and the apostate angels; which we know no more of, but only that they shall be judged; that "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day;" *Jude, ver. 6.*

Why their judgment is deferred so long we cannot tell; for it is plain that the angels fell from their first estate before man, and how

long we know not, for it was the serpent that beguiled Eve: but this we know, that whatever their first apostasy was, they have a great deal more to answer for now, and must expect a more terrible condemnation. All the sin that is in the world is originally owing to the temptation of the devil, who seduced our first parents in Paradise, and has ever since been the great tempter to wickedness and apostasy from God; and therefore he is in some degree entitled to all the wickedness of mankind.

And this is a good reason why the devil and his angels, and all bad men, should be judged and condemned together; those who tempt, and those who are overcome by temptations; the prince of darkness, and all his subjects, whether angels or men. Hell is the fire prepared for the devil and his angels, not for men; but when he has drawn mankind into the apostasy, it is fit they should share in his punishments too; and when our Lord comes to judge men who have been seduced and corrupted by evil spirits, there is no reason to think that wicked spirits should escape, who have seduced and tyrannized over mankind.

But that which we are at present concerned in is the judgment of mankind; that God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world, or the whole race of men, as St. John represents it; "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God," *Rev. xx. 12.*

No man who believes a future judgment makes any doubt of this, but that all shall be judged. For if any, why not all? We are all alike God's creatures; we are all equally accountable to him; and though we have very different talents, yet we have all some talent or other to improve for our Master's use; and therefore I shall not go about to convince any man that he is to be judged as well as the rest of mankind. But there are some persons who are apt to forget this, who have yet as much occasion to think of a future judgment as any other men, and therefore ought to be minded of it: and they are those who are very rich and great, or very poor, or in the vigour and gaiety of youth.

Ist, Rich and great men, princes and potentates, men of honour and fortune, who are exalted above the common level of mankind; these must all be judged as well as the meanest men, though they are not very apt to think of it. Great power, and great riches, make them revered and adored like so many deities in this world; all men court and flatter them, and make a great distinction between them and those of a meaner rank and fortune: and this is apt to swell their minds; they look down upon the rest of the world as very much below them, and think they merit much whenever they look up to God. For such great men as they are to worship God, and lift up their eyes sometimes

to heaven, they imagine is so great an honour to God, and credit to religion, that a very little matter will be accepted from them. They see human judicatures very often have great respect for men's persons in judgment, and they hope God will consider their quality too, and deal with them like princes, or nobles, or gentlemen; as one unfortunate gentleman expressed himself not many years since at the gallows; and I fear therein spoke the secret thoughts and hopes of many others. So that if these men believe they shall be judged, yet they persuade themselves that they shall not be judged like other men; that God will wink at their faults, and have respect to their rank and quality, and excuse them from the strict observation of those laws which were made for meaner persons.

I suppose you do not expect I should gravely and seriously confute such vain conceits as these, which few men dare profess and own, and defend, though they secretly flatter themselves with such hopes, as is too visible in their lives: but since men are apt to think such things as they dare not speak, it will be useful to suggest some wiser thoughts to them, which may prevent such imaginations, and bring the greatest men living under the awe and terror of the future judgment.

For what a vain imagination is it that God will have regard to earthly greatness in judging the world? for what is this world, and all the greatness and glory of it, to him who made it? Great and small are but comparative terms, and nothing is great when compared with that which is greater. Consider the glory of our Judge, as I have already represented it to you, when he shall come attended with myriads of angels; and then think what little creeping worms you are to him! We may observe in this world, that every rank and degree of men appears considerable to those below them, but those above use them as inferiors, and are not afraid to judge and correct them for their faults. And is there not a much greater distance between God and the greatest emperor than there is between the greatest emperor and a petty constable? Consider the case of the apostate angels, of the devil himself, who is the prince of the power of the air, and was a very glorious spirit; and if, as great and glorious as he was, God flung him down from heaven for sin, and as powerful as he now is, who is the god of this world, will judge and condemn him at the last day, why should any man think that his power and greatness, which (be it what it will) can neither be compared to what the devil was nor to what he is, should excuse him from the judgment of God?

And since you boast of your power and greatness, who made you so? Who made you differ from the meanest beggar? who advances princes to the throne, and clothes them with glory and majesty? Is not *all power of God*? are they not his ministers and servants? And is

any minister too great to be corrected by his prince who made him so? Are not all ministers accountable to their Lord? and the greater their trust and power is, have they not a greater account to give? And is this a reason why they should give none? why they should be exempted from judgment, and from giving an account?

But it is a wonderful thing to me that any man should glory in power and greatness, or think himself too big to be judged by God, or that God will have any regard to his greatness in judging him; for did he but reflect upon his own state and condition in this world, it would convince him what a little inconsiderable creature he is.

As great as any man is, he is exposed to every accident, to all changes and vicissitudes of fortune. God can, and very often does, punish him in this world: and then there is no reason to expect that he will not judge him in the next. Pain and sickness stand in no awe of his greatness, and death is no more afraid of him than of a beggar. Those who are "gods on earth, must die like men;" which is the curse and punishment of sin: and this puts an end to all their greatness; for after a little funeral pomp is over, and they are laid in their graves with a little more ceremony than meaner men, they are forsaken of all their guards and retinue, and dependents, and are left to be a prey for worms; and is this the creature too great to reverence and worship God! and too big to be judged, whom worms eat, and beggars walk over his grave!

This is the weak and frail state of the greatest men on earth: they go naked and unarmed into another world, stripped of their power and fortune, of riches and honours, which dazzled the eyes of men here; and when they are gone, all men speak their minds freely of them, judge their lives and actions, arraign their memories, and revenge their injuries upon their graves; and when they are become little enough to be judged by men, surely they are not too big for God's judgment: "Then the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, as well as every bondman, and every freeman, shall hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and say to the rocks and mountains, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" *Rev. vi. 15, 16, 17.*

Consider this, ye rich and great men, who are so apt to forget God and a future judgment: riches profit not in the day of wrath, they cannot bribe God as they do men; no power can prevail against the Almighty: proud and swelling titles are mere empty bubbles, which burst and vanish into nothing in the next world. Men ye are, and ye

shall die like men, and shall be judged like men, and have much more reason to think of judgment than other men have; for ye have a greater account to give, and are in more danger of giving a very bad account, if you do not frequently and seriously think of judgment!

What a mighty trust, and a mighty temptation, are riches, and honour, and power! How much good, and how much hurt, may such men do in the world! And what a formidable thing is it to give an account of all the good that we might and ought to have done, and have not, and of all the evil we have done by the abuse of those blessings of Heaven, which we were intrusted with to do good!

Honour and power always carry some great duties with them; they are not merely intended to set some men above others, to command the cap and the knee, and external respects; but they are for the good order and government of the world, to suppress and punish wickedness, and to protect and encourage innocence and virtue. Such men are like the great lights of heaven, to direct and cherish the world with their light and influence; their examples are visible and conspicuous, and carry great authority with them, and if their motions be irregular and exorbitant, it proves as fatal as for the sun to forsake the ecliptic, and wander into unknown regions of the heaven, which would confound summer and winter, night and day, and bring the utmost disorder upon human affairs. When princes and great men, who should support religion, and punish wickedness, are the patrons of atheism, profaneness, and immorality, and give countenance and reputation to it by their examples, what multitudes of converts do they make! How does it give the reins to men's ungoverned lusts, when the restraints of fear and shame are gone! how does it corrupt even virtuous and well-disposed minds, when it is a fashionable thing to be wicked, when it qualifies them for preferments, and makes them fit for the best company; while virtue and modesty is the common subject of drollery and ridicule! when those who should administer justice to the world oppress the poor and fatherless, and accept the persons of the rich; when they pervert judgment for a reward, and enrich themselves with bribes. Such an abuse of power will have a very heavy account: what a dreadful thing will it be, when you come to judgment, to be pursued with the cries of widows and orphans, of ruined families, and, which is more dreadful yet, with the curses and execrations of murdered souls!

The like may be said of riches, which is but a stewardship, and we must give an account of it: and if, instead of improving a plentiful fortune to do good to the world, we spend it upon our lusts, and make ourselves beasts; if, with the rich man in the gospel, we fare deliciously every day, and suffer the poor and miserable to starve at our doors,

we must expect to hear what Abraham said to him, "Son, remember "thou hadst thy good things in thy lifetime, and Lazarus his evil "things; therefore now thou art tormented, and he is comforted."

"To whom much is given, of them shall much be required:" our account increases as our riches, and honour, and power, does; for the more opportunities we have of doing good, the more is expected from us; and the more we have experienced the Divine bounty and goodness, the greater returns we owe of duty and gratitude; and therefore rich, and great, and powerful, men have more reason to think of judgment than other men, because they have a greater account to give: and yet there is a greater reason than this too, that nothing but the frequent and serious thoughts of judgment will enable them to make a good account.

Our Saviour tells us, "how hard it is for a rich man to enter into "heaven; as hard as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle:" for how irresistible are the temptations of riches and power? which take off all the restraints of fear and shame, and furnish them with all the instruments and opportunities of gratifying their lusts.

How hard is it for men to bear greatness without pride and insolence; to be rich without being covetous or luxurious; to be devout worshippers of God when they themselves are adored and flattered by men? There are very few examples of humility, piety and devotion, temperance and chastity, in an exalted fortune. Prosperity is generally a greater trial of a steady and confirmed virtue than adversity is; for it scatters our thoughts, makes our spirits airy and volatile, gives new charms to the world, and kindles new fires within: it leads us through all the various scenes of pleasures, and keeps up and tempts our appetite with varieties and fresh delights, and entertains us so much abroad, that we can seldom retire into ourselves and converse with our own thoughts.

But would such men seriously think of judgment, it would teach them another use of riches and power; it would mind them that they are but men, as other men are, all alike to God; and that they shall be judged alike: that their riches and power, which distinguish them from other men is not their own, but they are intrusted with it by God; not to domineer over their fellow-creatures; not to "to eat "and drink, and be drunken, and to smite their fellow-servants;" but to relieve the poor, to defend the injured and oppressed, to be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widows. This is the honour God has conferred on them, that he has made them his ministers and stewards, tutelar angels, and even gods to men: and the way to be truly great is to improve their power and riches to make themselves very useful to the world. To

have power and riches is not to be great, but to do a great deal of good with them : this sets them above other men, and will prepare glorious rewards for them. But if power and riches make them only more wicked than their neighbours, all that they get by it will be a hotter hell.

2dly, Those who are very poor and calamitous are very apt to forget a future judgment, or think themselves unconcerned in it. They are too little for judgment, as the others were too great : what should God judge them for, whom he has intrusted with little or nothing but their skins ? who can spare no time to worship God ; for all the time they have is little enough to get bread in : who cannot be blamed if, when they can get a little drink, they drink away sorrow, and forget their wants and miseries for some few moments ; or if they pilfer and steal, or lie, to get bread, necessity has no law, and makes such actions innocent in them as are great crimes in other men. By such kind of excuses as these, poor men excuse away all concernment about religion : religion is above them ; rich and happy people may be at leisure for it, but they have enough to do to live. The church-door they like very well, where devout and charitable people drop their alms ; but the inside of the church does not belong to them, and they have nothing to do there. And thus it is proportionably in less degrees of poverty ; every condition of life which may be called poor is apt to tempt men to be careless of religion, and unmindful of a future judgment.

Now, what is to be said to these men ? Shall we prove that poor men shall be judged as well as rich ? I doubt you would think me very impertinent should I attempt it ; but if all mankind are to be judged, the poor must be judged too, if they be men.

Are not poor men able to give an account of their actions ? and why then should they not be called to an account for them ? Are they not reasonable creatures, and able to understand and give a reason for what they do ? and why then should not God ask a reason of them ? If they have nothing to give an account of, no account shall be demanded ; but if they have, why should they not give an account of what they have, be it more or less ? Poor men shall give no account of riches, because they have them not ; but this does not hinder but that they may give an account of their poverty, those graces which become a poor and low fortune.

They shall not be examined about their charity when they had nothing to give, but they may for their thankfulness to God, and to their benefactors : they shall not be examined how they used their riches which they had not, but they may be how they bore their poverty ; whether external poverty has taught them true poverty of spirit, hu-

mility, modesty, patience in want and sufferings, contentment with a little, submission to the will of God, and a cheerful dependence on Providence for their daily bread; whether they have constantly prayed to God for the supply of their wants, as well as begged an alms of men, and implored the help and assistance of the rich: these are duties and virtues which poverty teaches, and which poor men ought to exercise, and, therefore, which God may challenge from them, and judge them for.

It is a very wild imagination to think that poverty will excuse men's pride, and rudeness, and insolence, unless it be a virtue to be proud when men have no temptation to it, when they have nothing to be proud of.

Will poverty excuse sloth and idleness? When men have nothing to live by but their hands, is that a reason why they should not work? when men are able to work and get their own living, is poverty an excuse for begging, and living idly upon the charity and industry of other men? When they work hard all day to get bread for themselves and families, is this a reason to go to the alehouse and spend it all at night, to make themselves beasts, and leave their wives and children to starve? Ought not God and men to judge them for this?

But, above all things, poverty is the most unreasonable and senseless excuse for irreligion, for neglecting the worship of God; for certainly if any thing will make us sensible how much we stand in need of God poverty will. Rich men, whose coffers are full of treasure, who have goods laid up for many years, are apt to forget God, because they think they have no present need of him; they know how to live without him; they have no occasion to beg their daily bread of him who have enough to last their lives, and to maintain their posterity in luxury when they are gone. But methinks poor men, who have no provisions before-hand, and know not where they shall have their bread the next day, should be very sensible that they live upon Providence, that they have nothing else to trust to: and would not any one reasonably expect that such men would be very devout worshippers of God, would pray constantly and heartily to him to take them into his care, when they have nothing but the providence of God to depend on. One would think such men should, above all things, take care to please God, and to make him their friend and patron; for if he cast them off they have no other refuge. That is a profane irreligious mind indeed, whom want and distress will not drive to God.

But what would you have such poor men do? They have not time to spare for their prayers unless they should spare it from eating or sleeping; they must be up early at work, and have not leisure for their devotions as those have who live at ease.

But did they believe the Divine Providence, it would satisfy them that the time of prayer is the best spent of any time in the day, and contributes more to make a comfortable provision for them than their hardest labour; for the blessing of God is more than our diligence and labour: he can succeed and prosper our work; he can raise up unexpected friends to us, and, by some unforeseen accident, can change the whole scene of our lives for a more easy and prosperous fortune.

However, want of time for prayer and devotion is always a pretence, and nothing but a pretence, to excuse the indevotion of our minds. A man who loves and reverences God never wants time for prayer, whatever his state of life be; a poor labouring man cannot, every day, spend an hour at church at his prayers, but if he have a mind prepared and disposed for it, he can fall upon his knees, and offer up a short prayer to God as soon as he rises, which takes up very little time; and though he cannot be long upon his knees, yet he can raise up his heart to Heaven in short and pious ejaculations: no business can hinder a devout mind from this, and therefore no business can excuse the not doing it; and this will be accepted by God, when we have no time for more solemn prayer.

So that you see religion is the business, and ought to be the care of poor men, as well as of the rich. There are graces and virtues for them to exercise, proper for their state of life; and, therefore, they shall be judged as well as the rich, and ought frequently to think of a future judgment, and to live under the constant awe and sense of it.

The constant sense of a future judgment is very necessary for all mankind, to govern their lives, and to prepare their accounts; but, besides this, it is of the greatest use to poor men of any other, for it will, in a great measure, help to cure their poverty, or to make it easy.

In ordinary cases, a man who lives under a constant sense of judgment, cannot be poor to extremity; for the sense of judgment will make him diligent, and industrious, and honest, and frugal, and temperate, and a devout worshipper of God, which are all thriving virtues, and will not suffer a man to be miserably poor: "The hand of the diligent maketh rich;" and when it does not make rich it at least prevents poverty. Inflexible honesty gives a man reputation in the world, brings him into business and employment, and that is a way to thrive: frugality and temperance save what is got, and increase the stores; and reverence and devotion for God bring down blessings on them, give success to their honest labours, and we know it is the blessing of God which maketh rich.

The experience of the world, as well as the reason of the thing, proves this. The miserable poor are generally the most corrupt and profligate part of mankind, the very reproach of human nature; and

if you make any curious observations about it, you will generally find that it is not their poverty which makes them wicked, but their wickedness makes them poor. You shall very rarely see an honest, industrious, sober, pious man, but makes a very good shift to live comfortably in the world, unless the times prove very hard, that there is but little work, and provisions dear, or that his family increases so quick upon him that he has a great charge of children before any of them are capable of working for their living; and in this case, such industrious men seldom want friends; for every one who knows them is ready to help them: and, therefore, poor men ought to think of a future judgment, not only to save their souls, but to teach them to live in the world, to deliver them from the extreme pressures of want: and this a double obligation upon poor men to think frequently of a future judgment, that it is necessary to provide a comfortable subsistence for them in this world, and to save their souls in the next.

But whether this remove their poverty or not, it will support them under it, make them patient and contented with their portion here: if they govern their lives under the sense of a future judgment, it will support them under the meanness and calamities of their present fortune with better hopes. They will then contemplate Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, and comfort themselves with the change of their condition as soon as they remove into the other world; there they shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more: their wants and sufferings in this world, if they bear them well, shall be greatly rewarded; and though they grovel in the dust here, and are worms and no men, they shall then shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. It is a miserable condition indeed to remove from a dunghil to hell; but a dunghil is a palace if it will advance us to heaven. Nothing but these things can make extreme poverty tolerable, but such hopes as these will make the poorest man rich and happy.

3dly, None can have more reason to be put in mind of a future judgment than young men, for none are more apt to forget it; as Solomon intimates in his counsel to young men, *Eccles. xi. 9.* "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know, that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment." But to make this discourse as useful as I can, I shall,

1. Persuade young men to possess themselves with a serious and hearty belief that they shall be judged. 2. Persuade them frequently and seriously to think of a future judgment.

1. Let me persuade young men to possess their minds with a serious and hearty belief that they shall be judged: for though they dare not

own that they have the least hope of escaping the judgment of God more than other men, yet there is reason to suspect that they flatter themselves that their age will excuse their crimes, that God will take little notice of the folly and giddiness of youth, but will wink at it as he did at the times of ignorance.

For though young men commonly think themselves the wisest part of mankind, and despise the experience and counsels of age, yet they are contented to plead their ignorance and folly, their rashness and giddiness, when they hope to escape judgment by it. They are but lately come into the world, and every thing is new and surprising to them: they admire before they understand, and are tempted by mere curiosity to taste forbidden pleasures. Sense is very strong and vigorous in them, and reason is weak; their passions eager and vehement, and yet soft and tender to every impression: they are led by examples, and there are more bad than good examples in the world; and the examples of the most are most prevalent, especially when they tempt them to ease and softness and luxury, which are great temptations to youth without examples. And can we think that God will not make great allowances for such a weak and deceivable state of human nature?

This is the fairest plea that can be made for youth, why God should indulge their extravagancies, and not exact so strict and severe an account from them as from those of riper years. But if we consider this over again, we shall find as great reason why God should judge youth as why he should judge any other age of men.

1. For, first, Young men are accountable for their actions as well as the old; they understand the difference between good and evil, they know that there is a God, whose creatures they are, and whom they ought to worship and obey. And this, as I observed before, makes man an accountable creature, and that makes it fit for God to call him to an account. And if this be a good argument to prove that mankind shall be judged, it proves that all men must be judged who are capable of giving an account, and then young men must be judged as well as the old.

Unless we will allow that reason and understanding makes men liable to be judged, I would desire to know at what age God must begin to judge men. No doubt but every age will find something or other to plead for its exemption from judgment as well as youth, of which more anon. But if reason makes men the subjects of laws and government, then we must begin to be obnoxious to judgment with the beginnings of reason, and our account will increase as our reason does; that is, as far as our reason extends we must give an account; what our reason and understanding does not reach we shall give no account of. This is very just that the degrees of our knowledge, when it bears propor-

tion to our age, should lessen or increase our account; but it is reasonable too, that men should give an account of their actions proportionably to their knowledge: and this indeed will make a difference in the account of young and older men, though it will not wholly excuse young men from giving an account. This may excuse a great many follies, indiscretions, and mistakes of youth, but it can excuse no known and wilful sin.

There is a certain age indeed before human laws will take cognizance of the actions of children, as not looking on them as reasonable agents; they must be governed by the rod, and kept under discipline, but have not understanding enough to govern themselves by laws: but human laws will judge and punish those who hope to plead their youth as an exemption from the judgment of God. But why should young men expect that God will not judge them for those crimes for which men will judge, and condemn, and execute them too? This is either unjust in men, or very just in God. Before they flatter themselves that God will excuse the lewdness, and extravagancies, and frenzies, of their youth, let them try whether this plea will pass in human courts, and not think it unreasonable that God should judge and punish youth, when the wisdom of all nations has thought it just and reasonable.

2. Consider farther, whether you can think it fitting that God should suffer young men to live as they list without judging them for it? that he should lay the reins on their necks, and let them indulge their lusts and appetites, and take their fill of sensual pleasures, and commit all manner of villanies without restraint?

For can it become a wise and holy God to grant indulgence to vice? Are adulteries, fornications, drunkenness, gluttony, profaneness, irreligion, no sins, when committed by young men? Can any one give a reason why these sins shall damn a man of forty or fifty and be indulged in one of twenty?

Does it become the wise and holy Governor of the world to contribute so much to the debauching mankind as to indulge their youthful lusts? to suffer their tender minds to be corrupted with the love and practice of vice? to be prepossessed and prejudiced against the severities of a holy life? When men, by indulging their lusts, are grown fond of this world, and of bodily pleasures, when are they likely to grow wise? when will they think it time to submit to God's government, and to obey his laws? How seldom is it seen that men, who contract habits of wickedness in their youth, ever get a perfect mastery of them, or prove seriously religious? and those who do, with what infinite difficulty do they do it?

So that, should God give liberty to men to be as wicked as they please while they are young, it would be to little purpose to give laws to ripen

years: the seeds of virtue or vice are sown in tender minds, and grow up with them, and are very difficultly rooted out. If God intends we should worship and obey him when we are men, he must lay early restraints upon us, and fashion our minds betimes: and that is a reason why he should judge youth, and antidote them against the flattering temptations of this life with the hopes and fears of another world. If you think it hard that God should judge you for the lewdness and extravagancies of youth, consider whether it would not be much harder to suffer you to be corrupted when you are young, and to damn you for continuing wicked when you are old. The fears of judgment may restrain and govern your youthful passions, and season you with the principles of an early piety, which will grow up into confirmed habits of virtue, which will direct and govern your lives in this world, and carry you safe to heaven: but if young men might sin securely without fear of judgment, in all likelihood they would sin on till they were old enough to be damned.

2. I must add this also, that there is as little reason to expect that young men should be excused from being judged, and from giving an account of their actions, as that any other men whatsoever should be excused; every age has its peculiar temptations and difficulties, and if this were a reason why they should not be judged, no men must be judged: but youth, before it is corrupted and grown ungovernable, has the fewest temptations, and the greatest restraints and preservatives, of any age, and therefore is the least excusable.

Youth indeed is rash, and giddy, and inconsiderate; but then it is, or ought to be, under the direction and government of parents, masters, and tutors; it is a great misfortune to them when they are not, and a great and fatal miscarriage in parents and masters when they neglect the prudent government of them. But this is the provision God has made for their government, and therefore has implanted in them a natural awe and reverence for their parents and superiors, which makes their counsels and examples sacred, which is a mighty advantage above what those men have who have no body to govern them, and have no government of themselves.

Their reason indeed is weak, but it is not corrupted, as a great many others have corrupted their reason by principles of Atheism and irreligion; they have a natural sense of God, and a natural awe and reverence for his justice and providence, and a natural belief of another world, especially if any care has been taken to instruct them in the principles of Christianity: and this gives them a great dread and horror of sin, which they believe will bring the judgments of God upon them in this world and in the next.

They have little experience of the world, and a great curiosity to

take the pleasures of it; but they are not yet acquainted with the sinful pleasures of it, they have not contracted a fondness for them, and the fear of God will more easily check and restrain a curiosity than conquer a habit; and therefore they have a more easy task to keep themselves innocent than old sinners have to conquer their vicious habits, who must "pluck out a right eye, and cut off a right hand, to enter into heaven."

And the natural modesty of youth is a mighty restraint, which makes them blush at the thoughts of any wickedness, and so afraid of a discovery when they think of committing it, that it deprives them of the opportunities of committing it: and while men retain their natural modesty, a thousand thoughts give check to them, and a thousand accidents disappoint them: but when they have sinned away their reputation, and their shame with it, when they are hardened against reproach and infamy, or have lost all sense of the difference between good and evil, they have nothing to stop them till they come to hell.

This is the original state of youth, which was made for piety and virtue; and all men must acknowledge that they are in a much nearer disposition for it than old sinners. There is almost as much difficulty at first to debauch an innocent mind as there is to reclaim an old sinner; to make the one conquer shame, as there is to make the other blush: and why then should we think that young men shall not be judged by God for breaking through all these restraints? When it is as hard a thing for them to be bad as it is for others to be good, why should they hope to escape in those sins for which others shall be judged and condemned?

This is sufficient to convince young men that God will judge them as well as others. As young as they are, they know when they do their duty, and when they transgress it. It never becomes a holy God, nor the wise Governor of the world, to indulge men in sin, and as little to indulge young men as any others: for if he should indulge them in contracting vicious habits when they are young, he has less reason to judge and condemn them for it when they are old. And indeed young men have least reason to expect such an indulgence; for whatever their temptations are, it is much easier for them to keep themselves innocent than it is for other men to conquer the habits of vice.

II. Let me now persuade young men frequently to think of a future judgment. There is great reason for this exhortation, because they are very apt to forget it, and yet they have great occasion for it.

1. They are very apt to forget it: Their spirits are gay and brisk, and they meet with such variety of entertainments, and will not admit of such melancholy thoughts of a future judgment. They are so lately come into the world, and are big (it may be) with such great designs

of advancing their fortunes in it, that they cannot think of going out of it very quickly again. They look upon judgment as they do upon the other world, as a great way off, and therefore it is not of a present concernment, but may be thought of time enough some years hence. These are all very foolish reasonings; but yet these, or such like fallacies, serve to impose upon young men: or whatever their pretence be, experience tells us, that it is true in fact, that they think very little of a judgment to come.

It is easy enough to show, that these are no reasons why they should not think frequently of a future judgment. How gay and pleasant soever they be, and whatever their designs are for this world, the thoughts of judgment will not allay nor interrupt their pleasures while they preserve their innocence. Nothing can make the thoughts of judgment uneasy to them, unless they resolve to take such liberties, and pursue such designs, as they are afraid to be called to an account for; and the reason why they should think of judgment is to prevent this; for if once they distract their minds with guilt, the thoughts of judgment will ever after be very uneasy to them, and they must never think of it if they can help it. The best way is to accustom our minds to the thoughts of judgment while we are innocent, before we begin to be afraid to think of judgment; and that will preserve our innocence, and then the thoughts of judgment will never interrupt our pleasures.

But if we cast off the thoughts of judgment in youth, which is the surest guard and preservative we have, we shall by degrees cast off the belief of it too. When we lay aside the thoughts of judgment, to take the greatest liberties "to walk in the ways of our hearts, and in the sight of our eyes," we contract such guilt as makes us afraid of judgment, and are very willing to believe that we shall never be judged; and then we may easily find some little argument or other to persuade us that either there is no judgment, or that there is no God, or that he takes no notice of human actions.

The thoughts of judgment are never uneasy and troublesome till man have scared and terrified their consciences with guilt; and therefore the certain way never to have the thoughts of judgment troublesome is to begin betimes to make it familiar to us; and if we do so, the thoughts of it will not prove melancholy, and then we shall have no reason to lay them aside.

And it is a great mistake to imagine that there is no need to think of judgment but when it is near; that we may securely lay aside the thoughts of it when it is at a distance; for neither its being near, nor its being at a distance, is any reason either to think or not to think of judgment; but the true reason is, to govern our lives under the sense of a future account, and that is a good reason, equally good, whether

judgment be nigh at hand or a great way off. For if we must give an account of what we do at seventeen or twenty years old, and of what we do at fifty or sixty, there is the same reason to think of judgment, and to govern our lives under the sense of it, when we are but twenty as when we are threescore years old.

2. Young men have great and constant occasion for the thoughts of judgment; and that is a good reason why they should think frequently and seriously of it.

What but this can reduce that giddy age within bounds, and make them live by rule? But if they would consider, that they must be judged by rule, by the laws of the everlasting gospel, this would do it. This would convince them that they are not their own masters, that they are not at liberty to live as they list, and to pursue every wild and roving fancy: they may indeed do this, if they please; but they shall be judged for it if they do.

What but this can cool the heats of youth, and conquer all the charms of flesh and sense? *But know*, saith the wise man, "that for all these things God will call thee to judgment." And a man who is afraid of judgment, who is afraid of lakes of fire and brimstone, who has the terrible prospect of eternal miseries before him, will have no great appetite to the choicest sensualities: he will freeze in the embraces of the most beloved mistress, and will tremble in the midst of his cups, as Belshazzar did, when he saw the hand-writing upon the wall: for who can bear the thoughts of being miserable for ever? Who, with these thoughts about him, can relish such fatal pleasures? pleasures, which will cost him his soul! Short and dying and vanishing pleasures, which will end in eternal pain! Who would not be contented to endure the pain of denying an appetite, of subduing a domineering passion, of plucking out a right eye, and cutting off a right hand, rather than to be miserable for ever? And when it is so impossible for young men to resist these flattering temptations without a present and awful sense of judgment, can any thing more concern them than frequently to repeat these thoughts, and to possess their imaginations with the lasting impressions and images of it, that it may be always at hand, and ready for use?

But this is necessary for all men, as well as those who are young: whoever takes care of his soul, ought to keep his eye upon a future judgment. I grant it is so; but there are some peculiar advantages, which young men will reap by this, if they begin this practice betimes.

1st, For this will preserve their innocence and virtue, and prevent the terrors and agonies of a late repentance. All the kindness the thoughts of judgment can do to old sinners is to put a stop to them, and to bring them to repentance; and this is a very great kindness, if it makes them

true penitents, because it will save their souls. And this is that which most sinners desire, to enjoy the pleasures of sin as long as they can and to repent before they die; and thus they think they adjust all interests, gratify the flesh, and save their souls at last.

But if these men ever prove true penitents, they become very sensible of their mistake: they wish then, when it is too late, they had "remembered their Creator in the days of their youth;" that they had preserved themselves from the pollutions of flesh and sense; they feel by sad experience, "what an evil and a bitter thing it is to sin against God;" how amazing the shame, how sharp the sorrow of repentance is! It is a very melancholy and disconsolate work, when men draw near their end, to look back upon a vicious and profligate life, to have their whole lives to unlive again; to abhor themselves for what they have done, and to look forward with trembling into the other world: for such late penitents generally carry the marks of their repentance, in shame and sorrow, to the grave with them.

All this young men may prevent, if they will but think of judgment in their youth, and govern their lives under a sense of it. This will make them "remember their Creator in the days of their youth," and consecrate their tender age to his service: it will preserve them from youthful lusts, from all enormous crimes, and give them the humble assurance and confidence of dutiful children in their addresses to God. When they draw near a conclusion of their lives, they review their past victories over the world and the flesh with the securest triumphs. The little follies, and indiscretions, and miscarriages, which the best men are subject to, will keep them humble, and teach them to trust only in the merits and intercession of Christ: but when they have made it the whole business of their lives to please God, (though with the common weaknesses and infirmities of human nature), they feel great peace of mind, and assurance of the love of God; and the nearer their work is to an end the more securely they triumph.

What a happy state shall we think this, when death and judgment are in view, to feel so sweet a calm in our breasts! to have so joyful a prospect before us! And who would not think of judgment when he is young, that the hope and expectation of it may be the comfort and support of age; that when he may review his past life, not to undo what he has done, but to taste the pleasures, and to reap the rewards of it, in present peace of mind, and great hopes?

2dly, There is another advantage which young men may make of the early thoughts of judgment, which old sinners have lost, and can never retrieve by all their repentance, *viz.* to make great advances and attainments in piety and virtue, which will greatly augment their reward. Men who sin on till old age, though they prove true peni-

tents at last, can never recover this; for their time is past, and their youthful strength and vigour spent, and the scene of action over: they can never recall thirty or forty years past, in which, if they had improved their time well, they might have done great service to God and to religion, and great good to men. But those who are beginning their lives, if they start right at first, and pursue an even and steady course of piety and virtue, if they keep the future judgment and the next world always in their eye, what improvements will they make! what rich treasures and glorious rewards may they expect from that righteous Judge, "who will render to every man according to his works!"

The most that a penitent can expect, after a long life spent in wickedness and folly, is to get to heaven; and it is infinite mercy in God to accept of such penitents: but the bright and dazzling crowns are reserved for those who have spent their lives well, and glorified God on earth, and finished the work he gave them to do. Such men will triumph at the conclusion of their race and warfare, as St. Paul did; "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

I know this will not affect those men now who love their sins, and desire to keep them as long as they can: they will be very well satisfied if they can but get to heaven at last, how mean soever their station be there; for they are not so desirous to go to heaven as to escape hell; and if they can but keep out of hell, it is all they hope for. But men must have a greater spirit, a more divine and generous temper of soul, before they can get to heaven. If ever they prove true penitents, the loss of so many opportunities of doing good, and the loss of any degrees of glory they might have had, will both shame and afflict them. I am sure, the greater rewards we expect in the other world, the greater degrees of glory and happiness, the greater will our joy and triumph be.

Are not men in this world as fond of happiness as they are afraid of misery? Does not a great mind despise little things, and aim at what is great? and is there not as much reason to aim at the highest happiness we are capable of in the next world as well as in this?

This is the noble prize I would propose to young men: You are now beginning your race, your day is but in its dawn: if you rise with the sun, and work hard all day, and spend your whole lives in God's service, what a great deal of work will you do, and what a proportionably great reward will you have? This you will do, if you make the thoughts of judgment familiar to you; this will keep a constant guard upon your actions, this will make you "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of our Lord, as knowing that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

C H A P. VI.

For what we shall be judged.

VI. **L**ET us now inquire what we are to be judged for : and the general answer to this is very plain, " That we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad," 2 Cor. v. 10. ; that is, we shall be judged for all the good and evil we have done.

This is obvious to all men, and acknowledged by all who believe a judgment ; and it may be thought impertinent to prove that we shall be judged for such or such particular crimes, when it is universally confessed that we shall be judged for all.

But, as I observed under the former head, though all men who believe a future judgment profess to believe also that all men shall be judged, yet some men are very apt to forget it, and to flatter themselves that they shall escape better than others ; so it is here : though men will in general acknowledge that we must give an account of whatever we have done in the body ; yet there are a great many things which, in themselves, are very great crimes, and yet many men think there is no account to be given of them. I shall not instance in particular sins, though a great many such there are, which few men take any great notice of ; but shall confine myself to what is of a more general nature, for particulars would be endless.

I. First, then, we must remember that we shall be judged for our ignorance : which some men are so far from suspecting that they take sanctuary in their ignorance to screen them from the judgment of God. If they can but keep out the light they think they are safe ; to stumble and fall in the dark is a misfortune, not a fault, and will rather move pity and compassion than provoke revenge. This makes some men so regardless of knowledge, they think God will judge them for no more than they know ; and all the good they are like to get by knowledge is to increase and aggravate their account.

I shall not enter into that dispute now, (which is nothing to our present purpose), how far, and in what cases, ignorance will excuse ; though I think it is very plain in general, that as far as ignorance itself is excusable so far ignorance will excuse : but my business at present is to show, that commonly ignorance itself is a great crime, and when it is so, if men shall not be judged for the sins which they ignorantly commit, yet they shall be judged and condemned for their ignorance as well as for their sins against knowledge.

For is not man a reasonable creature ? and is not a reasonable

creature as much bound to know his duty as he is to practise it? Has God given us reason to be the guide and director of our lives, and is it not a great crime not to attend to it, not to improve and cultivate it? Have we eyes in our heads, and is it any excuse to us that we shut them, and lose our way? Is it any excuse to us not to know God, and our duty to him, when God has made us reasonable creatures, who may know their Maker if they please, and understand the difference between good and evil? I am sure St. Paul by this argument proves, that the Heathens were inexcusable, because God had implanted such natural notions of himself on their minds, and had given them so many external and visible demonstrations of his power and providence in making and governing the world; *Rom. i. 19, 20.* "Because that which
 " may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed
 " it unto them. For the invisible things of God from the creation of
 " the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are
 " made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are with-
 " out any excuse." The Heathens did greatly err, both in the know-
 ledge and worship of God; they were convinced by the natural sense
 of their minds, and by the works of creation, that there is a God: and
 therefore they are said "to know God," *ver. 21.* And by the same
 way they might have known that God who made the world "is not
 " like to gold and silver, or the works of men's hands," to images
 " made like to corruptible man, or to birds, and four-footed beasts,
 " and creeping things:" and therefore, though they were really ig-
 norant of the nature of God, and had entertained very gross imagi-
 nations of the Deity, yet they were without excuse, because God is to
 be known by reason and nature. And therefore a reasonable creature,
 who lives in a world which has the visible marks of infinite wisdom
 and power on it, can never be excused for not knowing God; that is
 to say, nothing will excuse our ignorance of that which we may know,
 and which we ought to know.

But if the Heathens were so inexcusable for their ignorance of God, who had no other helps but the light of nature, and the visible works of God, to be sure ignorance must be a great crime in those who live where the gospel is preached, and may read the word of God themselves if they please, and learn their duty from it. God knows, a great many very ignorant people there are among us, who know little more of God than the Heathens did; who sit in darkness, and in the valley of the shadow of death in the very regions of light, "when the day-
 " spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit
 " in darkness, and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into
 " the ways of peace."

Will it not be an impudent thing for such men to plead ignorance

at the day of judgment, who would not look into the Bible, nor attend public instructions, to learn their duty? who had the means and opportunities of knowledge, but would not use them? who took a great deal of pains to be ignorant, and to keep out of the way of knowledge, which so often crosseth them, that they had much ado to escape it? Whatever may be pleaded in excuse of the ignorance of Heathens, there can be no excuse for Christians, who have the most perfect revelation of the will of God, and will not look into it: this is a great contempt of God; it is in effect to say to God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways," *Job xxi. 14*. And it is hard to say which is the most provoking sin, to despise the knowledge of God, or to break his laws: not to think it with our while to know the will of God, or through the power of temptation to transgress our duty.

And this is the danger we are in if we neglect or reject the knowledge of the gospel; our ignorance will be our greatest crime; it will be so far from excusing our wickedness that it will aggravate it; for we chuse to be ignorant, that we may be wicked: and therefore it concerns us diligently to read and study the Scriptures, and to attend upon the public ministry of the word, and the private instructions and directions of our spiritual guides; for since Christ came from heaven to declare the will of God, and has put the holy Scriptures into our hands, which are a perfect rule of faith and manners, and furnished us with all the advantages to increase in knowledge; it is as dangerous a thing to be wilfully ignorant of the gospel as it is to disobey it.

II. As men shall be judged for their ignorance, so they shall be judged for their infidelity. This is so plain in Scripture that it needs little proof. Our Saviour expressly tells us, "He that believeth on him," that is, on the Son of God, whom God sent into the world, that the world through him might be saved, "is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," *John iii. 18, 19*. This our Saviour frequently inculcates on the Jews, that unless they believe on him they must die and perish in their sins. And we know the Jews were rejected by God for their infidelity; their temple, and city, and nation, destroyed by the Romans; and they dispersed and scattered among all nations to this day. And our Saviour, after his resurrection, when he gave commission to his apostles to go into all the world, and to preach the gospel to every creature, universally pronounces, "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," *Mark xvi. 16*. And there-

fore St. Peter tells the Jews, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," *Acts* iv. 12. And if there be no other name whereby men must be saved, infidelity must damn us.

Would some men in our days seriously consider this, they would not think themselves so secure in their infidelity, nor take so much pains to make themselves infidels: for if, after all their pains to disbelieve the gospel, it should prove true at last, they must be damned for disbelieving it.

If Christ came into the world to save sinners, and there is no other name under heaven whereby sinners can be saved, those who will not believe on his name must eternally perish: and if there were but one physician in the world who could cure such a mortal distemper, those who labour under this distemper, and will not go to this physician for their cure, must necessarily die by their neglect; their infidelity in that case would kill them, (what reason soever they could pretend for their infidelity), by neglecting the only means of their recovery.

But besides this, infidelity is a very great crime when we have sufficient reasons and motives of faith: for this destroys all commerce and intercourse (if I may so speak) between God and men. If men may be allowed to disbelieve a revelation, which has all the evidence and proof that any revelation can have, it makes it impossible for God to reveal his will to the world, at least to give us such a standing revelation as may be a certain rule of faith to all ages.

And besides this, infidelity is not owing to want of evidence, but to an evil temper of mind, which is prepossessed with such vicious lusts and passions as will not suffer men to believe: thus our Saviour tells us, "That men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil:" and tells the Pharisees, "How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another, and seek not that honour which cometh of God?" So that infidelity is more in men's wills than in their understandings, and therefore is as punishable as any other vice: and though such infidels will pretend to reason for their infidelity, and despise and laugh at the easy credulity of the rest of the world, they may have a great force and bias upon their understandings for all that; and would they be honest and sincere, they themselves must be sensible of it: however, God who sees their hearts, sees that it is so; and it is reason enough to by-standers to suspect it is so, when they observe that the more virtuously men are inclined the more readily they embrace the gospel, and the more firmly they believe it; whereas infidels commonly make little pretence to sobriety or virtue, but are men of this world, who design no more than to please themselves in the enjoyment of it; and when men's understandings in other matters are equally good, it

is very reasonably suspicious that it is only their different inclinations and passions which make them judge so differently of things.

If this be the case, as our Saviour assures us it is, and as our own reason, and our observation of mankind, may give us sufficient cause to suspect, all men must grant that it is as fit men should be judged for their infidelity as for any other vice. And this is reason enough to make men afraid of infidelity: for if they may be damned for being infidels, they have no reason to be secure in their infidelity.

Infidels themselves must confess, that if there be sufficient reason to believe the gospel, they deserve to be punished for their unbelief: and if it should prove true at last, it will be too late to dispute it in the other world whether God had given them sufficient evidence of it. The great numbers of believers, who were as wise and cautious men as themselves, will convince them that there was evidence enough for wise-thinking men to believe the gospel: and when they shall be ashamed to plead want of evidence for their unbelief, what excuse will they find for their infidelity?

This may convince infidels themselves, that their infidelity is no security to them; for whether they will believe heaven and hell or not, if there be an heaven, they shall lose it, and if there be an hell, they shall fall into it for their infidelity, and deservedly too, if their infidelity be caused by the fault of their wills, not by a want of evidence: and therefore no man can be secure in his infidelity till he be secure that his infidelity is not wilful, that there is no corrupt nor vicious affection which biases and perverts his judgment; and there is but one way of trying this that I know of, and I am pretty confident it would cure all the infidelity in the world: let men renounce all their sinful lusts and vices, which make them infamous to the world, let them obey the laws of the gospel, which are for the good of human societies, for the good of their families, which are the ornament and perfection of human nature, whether the gospel be true or not; and then if they can disbelieve the gospel, it is not because their deeds are evil, not because they have some lust or other to serve by their infidelity; and this would make their infidelity very excusable; but I know not of such an infidel as this in the world. It is apparent and visible that the infidels of our days promise themselves security in their vices from their infidelity: they laugh at heaven and hell, because they will not be at the pains to go to heaven, and are not afraid of hell: whatever wit and reason they pretend to, all mankind see which way their inclinations lead them; and if they do not see it themselves, nor suspect that this may be the cause of their infidelity, whatever wit they may have they have no sense.

III. We shall be judged also for not improving those talents we are intrusted with; that is, for not doing good in the world: this many

men are apt to forget. To squander away and waste their master's goods, to do that which is evil, this they think they must give an account of; but if they do no hurt, they are not much concerned what good they do. But our Saviour, in the parable of the talents, informs us better, that we must give an account of our improvements: for he who received but one talent, went and digged in the earth and hid his lord's money; and when his lord came to reckon with him, he said, "Lord, I knew that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hadst not sown, and gathering where thou hadst not strewed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast what is thine. But his lord answered, and said unto him, Thou wicked servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received my own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him—and cast ye the unprofitable servant into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," *Mat. xxv. 24, &c.*

Here we plainly see that this servant was not punished for spending his master's money, for he returned him the talent which he gave him; "Lo, here thou hast what is thine;" but for not improving it as his other servants had done; he was an "unprofitable servant," who had brought no advantage to his master. And thus it is plain men judge of servants; he is a very wicked steward indeed who embezzles his master's goods, but he is an unprofitable servant who makes no improvements; and thus God will judge of us as we think it reasonable to judge of our servants.

And, good God! when we consider how many talents we are intrusted with, it should make us tremble to think what little improvements we make of them: every thing that is improveable to the service and glory of God is a talent, and if we do not improve it to God's glory, and to do good in the world, it is a talent hid in a napkin, or buried in the earth. As to give some short hints and intimations of this; for a just discourse about this matter would be too long a digression.

Power must be allowed to be a talent, and a very improveable talent; for every degree of power gives men great opportunities of doing good. Some men move in a high sphere, and can give laws to those below; their very examples, their smiles or frowns, are laws, and can do more to the reforming of the world than the wisest instructions, the most convincing arguments, the most pathetical exhortations of meaner men.

But though few men have such a power as this, yet most men have some degree of power; to be sure every father and master of a family

has; his authority reaches his children and servants; and were this but wisely improved, it would soon reform the world: but how few are there who improve this talent, who use their power to make those who are under their authority obedient to God, which is the true use and improvement of power?

Riches, I suppose, will be allowed to be another very improveable talent; for what good may not a rich man do if he have a heart to do it? He may be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow, a tutelar angel, and even a god, to men. And riches are a trust and a stewardship of which we must give an account. To spend them upon our lusts, in rioting, luxury, and wantonness, this is to waste our master's goods; and to keep them safe, without doing any good with them, is to hide them in the earth, as the unprofitable servant did his talent: and if we must be judged and condemned for not improving our talent, for "not putting our Lord's money to the exchangers, that when he comes he may receive his own with usury," as our Saviour tells us, rich men ought to examine their accounts, and see what increase they have made of their talent; not how they have multiplied their gold and silver, but what good they have done with it.

Once more, wisdom and knowledge, especially the knowledge of God and of religion, is a very improveable talent; for there is nothing whereby we can more advance the glory of God, or do more good to men: to instruct the ignorant, to confirm the doubtful, to vindicate the being and providence of God, to shame and baffle Atheism and infidelity, to expound the doctrines and laws of our Saviour, and rescue them from perverse glosses and comments; this makes the glory of God more visible to the world, and serves mankind in their greatest and dearest interests; it feeds their souls with knowledge and understanding, directs them in the way to heaven, and minds them to take care of their eternal state.

This indeed is the peculiar care and charge of the ministers of religion, they are "the stewards of the mysteries of God;" those whom "our Lord has made rulers over his household, to give them meat in due season, *Mat. xxiv. 25.* And St. Paul tells us, "It is required of these stewards that they be found faithful." But this is a talent which those may have in great perfection who are not by office the guides of souls; and wherever it is it must be improved, and must be accounted for. We may many times do more service to God, and more good to men, by giving wise and wholesome instructions, than by giving an alms. This every man who knows enough to take care of his own soul can do in some measure; and this he must and ought to do as well as he can. But so few men think of this, or

charge themselves with it as belonging to their account, that is fit to mind you of it.

IV. We shall be judged not only for our own personal sins, but, in many cases, for the sins of other men, which we have made our own. There are a great many ways whereby we may bring the guilt of other men's sins upon ourselves; when we tempt and provoke men to sin by our authority, counsels, examples; when we persuade, entice, threaten, or shame men into sin; when we neglect our duty to those who are under our government; do not instruct them better, do not forewarn them of the danger they are in of being miserable in this world, and in the next; when we do not restrain them when we can, nor punish them for their sins; when we are partners with them in their wickedness, or the instruments of it; when we corrupt and debauch their understandings with the principles of atheism, infidelity, or scepticism: whatever wickedness men are drawn into by these means is chargeable upon ourselves, and must be added to our account, as in reason it ought to be: for if we are the cause of other men's sins, we must bear the guilt of them too.

And if this be so, what a terrible account have some men to make, which they never think of? How many have they corrupted by their examples, or counsels, or some other way? and how will this aggravate their own condemnation, when they carry a long train and retinue of undone souls to hell with them? That if men will not be good themselves, they ought to take care how they make others wicked: this they get nothing by but a double damnation; and they will find it enough to be damned for themselves.

V. We shall be judged also for our secret sins: thus Solomon tells us, "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing" whether it be good, or whether it be evil," *Eccl. xii. 14*. And St. Paul tells us, that "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to the gospel," *Rom. ii. 16*. And therefore David prays to God, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults," *Psal. xix. 12*.

There is no reason to think it should be otherwise, since our most secret sins are visible to God: "All things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do," *Heb. iv. 13*. And when God knows our most secret sins, why should he not judge us for them? Human judicatures will punish those sins which are more secretly committed, when they happen to be discovered; for the sin is never the less, nor does it less deserve to be punished, for being secret. And therefore, though such sins may escape the judgment of men, by being concealed, they cannot escape God's judgment, who sees and knows them.

I grant, that to commit sin openly in the face of the sun argues greater impudence in sinning, does more public dishonour to God,

and gives greater scandal to the world; but secret sins put as great contempt on God as open impieties do; for it is a plain proof that such sinners have a greater reverence for men than they have for God: though they profess to believe that God is present every where, and sees all they do, yet they securely commit the greatest villanies under his eye when no body else sees them, which they durst not commit in the presence of the meanest man.

This is a very unaccountable thing, and one would imagine that such men did not believe that God sees what they do in secret; and yet they do believe it; and we all know it is so. It may be there are few men but are guilty of some private sins at some time or other, which nothing could have persuaded them to have committed publicly; and yet when any man is tempted by secrecy and retirement, though he drives away the thoughts of God as much as he can while he is in pursuit of his lusts and wicked designs, when he comes to himself, and has time to think, his conscience speaks terror to him, and puts him in mind that God sees him though men do not.

But consider, I beseech you, if God will judge us for all our most secret sins, how little it will avail us to conceal our sins from men. We may indeed, by this means, escape present shame and punishment; but eternal shame, eternal torment, will be our portion: and are we more afraid of being reproached by men than of being reproached by God, and by our own consciences? than of being exposed to shame in the general assembly of men and angels, when God shall bring to light all the hidden works of darkness? Are we more afraid of some punishments in our bodies or estates, which human laws and judicatures can inflict on us, than we are of hell, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched?"

I am very sensible what it is that deceives men in this matter; and if you will but reflect upon yourselves, you will find what I say to be true. You do believe that God sees your most secret sins, and will judge and condemn you for them; and you are more afraid of hell than of all present shame and punishment; and yet you will venture upon those sins under the eye of God, which the presence of a man (at least of such men as will discover your sin and shame, and punish you for it) would have kept you from. What is the meaning of this, to be more afraid of God than of men, and yet to stand in more awe of man than of God?

The account of this, which looks like a mystery, I think is very plain. Men dare not commit those sins publicly which they will venture on in private; because if men see their wickedness, they immediately forfeit their reputation, and get such a blot and stain on their names, which all the tears of repentance cannot wash out again; for they know the

world is ill-natured, and every single miscarriage which comes to be known leaves an indelible character of infamy on them: and they are not willing to forfeit their reputation, which is so necessary to the comforts of life for ever. And, besides this, if the sins they commit be such as are punishable by human laws, if they be known, all their repentance, how sincere soever it be, will not deliver them from punishment; and though they love their sins very well, they will not venture the punishment of them.

But now, though God abhors all sins more than the best men do, and hell be a more terrible punishment than any thing in this world, yet God may be atoned and reconciled by repentance. Repentance will restore them to the favour of God, and hide and cover their sins, and blot them out of their account, and reconcile them to their own consciences, and prevent their final punishment in the next world. And this they resolve upon; repent they will, and repentance will secure them both from the future shame and punishment of sin: and therefore their only care is to conceal their shame from men, and to escape present punishment. And this is the reason why they dare commit those sins in secret, though they know God sees them, which they dare not commit in the view of the world. This makes the presence and the eye of God so ineffectual to restrain men's lusts, that they hope (after all their secret villanies) to be friends again with God; but do not expect, should the world discover their wickedness, that it would spare them, or ever think well of them more.

This looks like a very notable contrivance to preserve our reputation in the world by secrecy, and to regain the favour of God by repentance: but the devil is too cunning for sinners: for if the awe and reverence for God, and the fear of a future judgment, will not preserve men from secret sins, their other hopes will deceive them. Such men's shame will not be long concealed, and their repentance will soon grow impossible.

When men think to outwit God, his justice and providence are concerned for their discovery: almost as many sinners as we see hanged, or pilloried, or whipt, so many demonstrations there are that men cannot conceal their sins, or can never be sure they shall; for all these malefactors study secrecy and concealment as much as they can, and yet are, at one time or other, discovered, and suffer that public shame and punishment they deserve. There are a thousand accidents which betray the greatest privacies, a thousand circumstances which make men suspected, and that make them watched, and curiously observed; they cannot always use that caution that is required, or the partners and instruments of their sins are discovered, and then they betray one another: nay, many sins (without great caution) will betray them-

selves; let men be ever so secret in their lust, it will be known to all the world when they begin to rot with it, when the marks of their sin grow visible, and can be hid no longer: nay, men who sin very cautiously and secretly at first, in time grow more bold and impudent, and not so much concerned to be private; what at first they were ashamed the world should know, in time they think no shame. A custom of sinning, though in private, wears off the modesty of human nature; and when men forget to blush, they despise reproach and censure, and then publish their own wickedness, and seek for retirement and privacy no longer. The most impudent sinners in the world were at first modest; but if they find any excuse to make a beginning, how modest soever their beginnings are, they quickly improve, and lose the sense of sin, and aversion to it, by their repeated commissions, and then cannot bear the restraints of modesty and retirement.

And this shows what little hope there is that secret sinners should ever prove true penitents; for the most impudent and hardened sinners sinned very secretly at first, and of all those sinners who made very modest and bashful beginnings, I doubt, for one true penitent, some hundreds sin away all thoughts of repentance.

For the only effectual restraint upon human nature is an awe and reverence for God, and the fear of future judgment; and men may sin away this in private as well as in public. When once they conquer a reverence for God, and for their own consciences, (which a custom of sinning will do, be it ever so secret), they will have little regard to what the world says of them: they may fear human punishments, but they are sunk below the sense of shame.

If ever God reclaim such men, it must be either by some great and severe afflictions, which carry the marks of a divine vengeance on them, or by discovering their wickedness, and exposing them to public shame, before they have lost all sense of it. But if men sin secretly, and are very fortunate in concealing their sins, they will never think it time to repent till they can sin no longer.

And therefore, since God sees our most secret sins, and will judge us for them, let us maintain a constant awe for God in our greatest retirements: let us remember that God is always present with us; that he sees when no other eye sees; that he abhors our most secret sins; that it is a great contempt of God to retain a reverence for men, and to cast off the reverence of God; to be ashamed that men should know and see that wickedness which we are not ashamed to commit though we know God looks on.

But then, on the other hand, we must remember, that at the day of judgment God will reward all the good we do, how private and secret soever it be, as our Saviour assures us, with reference to our private de-

votions, private alms, and private fasts, *Matth. vi.* "That our Father, " who seeth in secret, will reward us openly."

It is too often seen, that men make religion itself minister to their lusts and secular interests, as the Pharisees did all their works to be seen and to be admired of men; and therefore their great care was for what is external and visible; they prayed in the corners of the streets, and gave their alms with the sound of a trumpet, and disfigured their faces, that they might appear unto men to fast. This was all vain-glory and hypocrisy; and when they were admired by men for it, they had the reward they aimed at, and all the reward they must expect.

But true religion does not court the applause of men: a good man must set a good example to the world in his public conversation; but such acts of virtue as may be private he is contented should be known to none but God and his own conscience.

This is highly acceptable to God; for it is to do good only for God's sake, and that satisfaction we take in doing good. Here is no mixture of secular ends, but God is the whole world to us: that he sees it, is more than all human applause, tho' the whole world were the theatre; we expect our reward from him, and from him only, for we let no body else know it; which is such a perfection of obedience, of faith, of hope and trust in God, as deserves the greatest rewards.

Those who industriously conceal the good they do from men can expect nothing from men for it, neither praise nor rewards; and, therefore, can have no other motive to do good but the love and reverence of God, and faith in him, or the pleasure they take in doing good for goodness' sake; which are such noble and divine principles of action as command reverence from all men when they are discovered, do great honour to the Divine nature, and will procure great rewards; which is a mighty encouragement to the most secret virtues, to the most secret acts of devotion and charity, "that our Father, " who seeth in secret, will reward us openly," in the presence of men and angels.

VI. We shall be judged for the sins of our thoughts: and though all men will confess this also, yet few consider it.

Good God! could we look into one another's thoughts, how should we blush and be confounded to see each other! Men who seem to make conscience of their external behaviour and conversation make very little conscience of governing their thoughts and secret passions.

Those who appear so modest as to blush at any indecent word or action, too often, at the very same time, burn with lust, and entertain their fancies with impure and unclean imaginations.

The most affable and courteous men, whose words and behaviour are soft, endearing, and obliging, can yet cherish revengeful thoughts,

anger, malice, hatred, and please themselves with the imagination of some tragical scenes which they dare not act.

Nay, many times those who appear humble to a fault, who seem as free from ambition as any men in the world, who arrogate nothing to themselves, nay, seem to admire every body but themselves, are yet very full of themselves, swollen with vain conceits of their own worth and merit, and please themselves with their own deserts, and that the world takes notice of their deserts; and then they consider how they ought to be rewarded and preferred, and will be sure to chuse very well for themselves; and thus entertain their deluded fancies with vain and empty scenes of greatness and glory.

The Pharisees thought all this very innocent; that to lust after a beautiful woman, and please themselves with amorous and wanton imaginations, were no crime, if they did not commit adultery; that anger, and malice, and revenge, were very innocent while confined to thought: but our Saviour teaches his disciples better. "Ye have heard it hath been said to them of old, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, Whosoever looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. Ye have heard it hath been said unto them of old, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, Whosoever shall be angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment," *Matth. v. 21, 22, 27, 28.*

For, indeed, the thoughts and passions of the soul defile the man; they discover the temper and complexion of the mind: this is "conceiving of lust," as St. James speaks; and while men indulge themselves in wanton, lustful, proud, ambitious, spiteful, and revengeful thoughts, it is almost impossible but such thoughts as these will influence their actions when a favourable opportunity serves; and if they do not, yet we know what the men's hearts are, and God who dwells within us, and sees our thoughts, will judge the secrets of hearts. Men who act over the scenes of lust, and pride, and revenge, in their minds, are as unlike to God, who is essential holiness, purity, and love, as those who commit all those villanies, which they only please themselves with the fancy of. Our likeness to God consists only in the conformity of our wills and affections to him; for it is only a spirit that can be like a spirit; and, therefore, while our thoughts and passions are so contrary and opposite to the Divine nature, God can never own us, we are not his children, we are not yet born of God, for we have nothing of his image on us.

And therefore let us take care of our thoughts, of our passions and secret affections, for we must be judged for these as well as for our

external actions: we may sin with our minds and spirits as well as with our bodies; and God, who is a spirit, requires the worship and obedience of our minds and spirits, and is as much offended with sinful and impure thoughts as with wicked actions.

VII. We shall be judged for words too. Thus our Saviour assures us, *Mat. xii. 36, 37.* "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." I need not tell you what these *idle words* are; profane atheistical discourse, blaspheming God and his providence, ridiculing his worship and religion, the doctrines and precepts of it, and those miracles which were wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost, for the confirmation of Christianity, to which our Saviour particularly refers in this place; or obscene and wanton discourse, which St. Paul calls *corrupt communication*, which should never come into the mouths of Christians; and all reviling and reproachful speeches, flandering, backbiting, railing, which our Saviour threatens with eternal damnation: "But I say unto you, Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire," *Mat. v. 22.* And St. James, with a peculiar respect to such angry reproachful language tells us, "If any man among you seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain:" *Jam. i. 26.* And yet I need not tell any man how common this practice is.

Atheistical, profane, obscene, reviling discourses, make up the wit, and humour, and conversation, of the age: the brisk and pleasant talkers would sit like mopes, and gaze upon one another without one wise word to say, unless you allow them to laugh at God and religion, and all things sacred, to make a mock of sin, to tickle their fancies with obscene jests or spiteful reflections: for, were it ever possible that such men should have nothing to laugh at, or nothing to rail at, they were undone.

These men never think of being judged for their words; and yet there is as much reason we should be judged for our words as for our actions.

Words are the first and most natural indications of the temper and disposition of the mind; for "out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh." Our words betray the Atheism and infidelity, the lust and wantonness, revenge and malice, and other evil passions, which are within. Men are generally more cautious of their actions than of their words, and they can speak their minds when they cannot act; and

therefore may be better known by their words than by their actions. Nay, words do not only betray what is within, but show what the heart most abounds with: for out of *the fulness* of the heart the mouth speaketh. That men talk of most which is most in their thoughts, and which they are most full of; so full, that they cannot open their mouths but it runs out.

There are some fools that only say in their hearts, *There is no God*. Such thoughts as these lie low and secret, are not come to maturity and perfection yet to be talked; but when men venture to say this with their mouths, when they come to be talking and disputing fools, it is a sign they are very full of these thoughts, and either are Atheists, or have a great mind to be so.

There are a great many lascivious wantons, who yet are very modest in conversation, and will not offend chaste ears with their wanton discourse; but when men think they cannot be witty nor pleasant company without larding their talk with obscene jests, and putting modest matrons and virgins to the blush, they have arrived at a great perfection of lewdness: and do not such men deserve to be judged?

But, besides this, does any thing do more mischief in the world than words, as little as some men make of them? Can there be a greater contempt of God than for men to deny his Being, to reproach his Providence, to ridicule his worship? St. Jude tells us, That "the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute vengeance upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of their ungodly deeds which they have committed, and of all the hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him," *Jude, ver. 14, 15*.

Does any thing more tend to corrupt the minds of men than such words, which St. Paul says, "eat like a canker," *2 Tim. ii. 17*. and prey upon the very vitals of religion?

What tends more to corrupt men's lives than lewd and wanton talk, as St. Paul tells us, that "evil communication corrupts good manners?"

What makes more divisions in the world, and gives greater disturbance to neighbourhoods, and families, and private persons, than slandering, and backbiting, and tale-bearing? I am sure St. James tells us, That "the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue amongst our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of Nature; and it is set on fire of hell," *chap. iii. 5, 6*. And if words can do so much mischief in the world, it is very fit that God should judge us for them; and then it is very fit that we should be very careful of our words.

C H A P. VII.

Concerning the righteousness of the future Judgment, and the rule whereby we shall be judged.

ST. Paul tells us, That "God will judge the world in righteousness;" which had been a terrible saying, did righteousness always signify strict and severe justice; for "who then could be saved?" But δικαιοσύνη signifies mercy, goodness, equity, as well as justice; or justice tempered with equity and mercy: and what the Apostle adds, that God will judge the world in righteousness, "by that Man whom he hath ordained;" that is, by Christ Jesus, proves, that righteousness signifies an equal, kind, and merciful justice. For Christ is a mediatory King, and a mediatory Judge: he judges between God and man; he sets bounds and measures to justice, and makes allowances for the folly and weaknesses of human nature, and, with a sovereign authority, dispenses not only the justice but the mercies of God.

When God appoints the great High Priest and Mediator to be Judge of the world, all mankind may expect a very merciful Judge; for the High Priest and Mediator must judge with equity and mercy, or else he does not maintain his character of Mediator when he judges: and yet the final judgment is the concluding act of his mediatory kingdom, and therefore an act of his mediation.

We know not certainly how God will deal with the Heathen world, who never heard of Christ, and never had the gospel preached to them; but it seems to look very favourable on them, that the Saviour of mankind, the merciful and compassionate Jesus, is their Judge also; which promises all the mercy that their condition is capable of, and how much that is we cannot tell; for the Saviour of the world must judge with mercy and equity, not by the rules of severe and rigorous justice: of which more presently.

Leaving then the Heathen world to the mercies of God, which are over all his works, it more concerns us to inquire by what rule Christ will judge us, who have had the gospel preached to us.

Now, in general St. Paul tells us, "God will judge the secrets of men by Christ Jesus, according to my gospel," *Rom. ii. 16.*; that is, by the gospel which I preach. The gospel of our Saviour is the rule whereby we shall be judged; by which our lives and actions shall be examined; and as the gospel acquits and condemns any man, so he shall be acquitted or condemned at the last judgment. So that we need not go far to know what our doom shall be; we need not search into the secret and hidden counsels of God; the gospel lies open before us, and though we cannot find our names there, we may read our sen-

tence: for "God will render unto every man according to his deeds. "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, "and honour, and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are "contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, "indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of "man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. But "glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the "Jew first, and also to the Gentile. For there is no respect of persons "with God," *Rom. ii. 6,—11*. What this good and this evil is the gospel acquaints us; and if we do what the gospel commands, we shall be acquitted and rewarded; if we do what it forbids, we shall be condemned. So that we certainly know, that all wicked men, who live in the wilful commission of any known sin, shall be finally condemned: Christ will at that day "profess unto them, I never knew you; depart "from me, ye that work iniquity," *Mat. vii. 23*. "Know ye not, that "the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind; nor thieves, "nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall "inherit the kingdom of God," *1 Cor. vi. 9, 10*. "But the righteous "shall shine forth like the sun, in the kingdom of their Father." And who these righteous are St. John tells us; "Little children, let no "man deceive you; he that doth righteousness is righteous, even as "he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the "devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose was the Son of "God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth "in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the "children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth "not his brother," *1 John iii. 7,—10*.

This is very plain, and so expressly taught in Scripture, that every man may as certainly know whether he shall be saved, or damned, at the last day, as he can know whether he be a good or a bad man; whether he doth righteousness, or commits iniquity.

But most men are conscious to themselves of so much wickedness, that they do not love to hear of this; for what will become of them, if they must be rewarded or punished according to their works? what difference is there between the law and the gospel, if they must still be judged according to their works? for what could the law do more than condemn the wicked, and reward the good? But they are sound and orthodox believers; they believe in God, who "justifieth the ungodly;" they believe in Christ, and trust in him for salvation; and

"there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus," *Rom. viii. 1.*; they expect to be "justified by faith," to be "saved by grace," and that "without the works of the law;" and what has the law then to do to condemn them who believe in Christ, who have satisfied the law in Christ; who have fulfilled the law in him, who are washed from their sins in his blood, and are clothed with his righteousness imputed to them? Those who are not in Christ must indeed be judged by their works; but all true believers are justified by their faith, and saved by grace.

Now, it must be confessed this is very expressly taught in Scripture, that we are justified by faith, and saved by grace, and that without the works of the law: *Rom. iii. 20,—25.* "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.—But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifest, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ.—Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." That Abraham our father was not justified by works, but by faith, *Rom. iv.* "That being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ," *Rom. v. 1.* By grace you are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast," *Eph. ii. 8, 9.* "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by grace hath he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," *Titus iii. 5.*

But then it is as plain, on the other hand, that God "will render to every man according to his deeds," *Rom. ii. 6.* "That we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive the things done in the body, according to what we have done, whether it be good or bad," *2 Cor. v. 10.* That Christ will condemn all wicked Christians, whatever their faith be; "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity," *Mat. vii. 21,—23.*

What shall we say then to this matter? Both these propositions must be allowed to be undoubtedly true: we are "justified by faith;" we are "saved by grace," without the "works of the law;" and we shall "be judged according to our works, and shall receive what

" we have done in this body, whether good or evil." That is, we are " justified by faith, justified freely by grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and through faith in his blood;" and yet shall be condemned at the last judgment if we live wickedly. This is a matter of very great consequence to be plainly stated; because a great many Christians encourage themselves in sin with vain hopes, and eternally perish by presumptuous faith and reliance on Christ.

I. Now, in the first place, That whatever mistakes or misapprehensions men may have about the nature of faith and justification may not endanger their souls, by encouraging them in sin, I observe, that we must reconcile the doctrine of justification by faith without works to our being judged by our works; not expound away the doctrine of our being judged according to our works to reconcile it to our notions of justification by faith. And there are manifest reasons for this.

1. Because it is as expressly taught in Scripture that we shall be judged by our works as it is that we are justified by faith; and therefore we must not oppose our justification by faith to our being judged by our works: for that is not to expound Scripture, but to confute one Scripture-doctrine by another; to prove that we shall not be judged by our works, though the Scripture says we shall, because the Scripture also teaches, that we are justified by faith without works. Now, if it be allowable to reject any Scripture-doctrine, or to confute one doctrine by another, we may with as good reason confute them both by each other, and believe neither; for if they cannot be reconciled, but we must deny one, our being judged by our works does as plainly prove that we are not justified by faith without works, as justification by faith proves that we shall not be judged by our works. We must distinguish between expounding and reconciling Scripture and confuting it; and therefore, whatever we believe about justification by faith, we must still confess we shall be judged by our works.

For, 2. There is great reason to expound justification by faith by our being judged by works; because, when we are told in Scripture that " God will render unto us according to our deeds; that every man must receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad;" these are plain proper expressions, without any figure or metaphor in them, and therefore are capable of no other sense than what the words at first view signify. We shall receive what we have done: if we have done good, we shall be rewarded; if we have done evil, we shall be punished: good men shall be received into heaven; and all wicked men, even wicked believers, as well as wicked infidels, shall be cast into hell: this every child understands to be the meaning of these words, and no other sense can be made of them; and therefore since this is so plainly and

so frequently taught in Scripture, whatever we believe else we must believe this, if we believe the Scripture.

But now, when we read of *being justified by faith* without works, every word is capable of very different senses, and we know is expounded very differently by learned men, according to the different hypotheses they intend to serve by it : and then we must confess it is not so certain what is meant by justification by faith without works, as what is meant by being judged according to our works : at least so much must be allowed, that we must prefer that sense of justification by faith which agrees with our being judged by our works, before any other interpretation which contradicts or overthrows this plain sense of a future judgment.

As, for instance: some by *justifying*, understand making just and righteous; that *to justify the ungodly* is to make a wicked man good by the power and efficacy of faith ; but then to justify the ungodly without the works of the law, or to make a wicked man good without good works, does not sound very well ; and therefore others more reasonably, and more agreeably to Scripture, understand *justifying* in a forensic sense, for absolving, acquitting, declaring, and accounting men just and righteous, and treating them as such ; that is, *imputing righteousness* to them, though in a strict and proper sense they are not inherently righteous ; and then this forensic justification may either signify our being *justified* at baptism, when, by the profession of our faith in Christ, we are incorporated by baptism into Christ's church, and are made the members of his mystical body, and have all our sins washed away in his blood, and come pure and innocent out of the laver of regeneration ; and thus the most ungodly sinners are justified by faith in baptism, without works, or any antecedent righteousness of their own : or else this justification may be extended to the future judgment ; that at the last day of account we shall be justified, acquitted, absolved, rewarded, by faith without works ; but this does not agree very well with our being judged, and receiving according to our works : the Scripture expressly teaches, that we are justified by faith without works, and that we shall be judged by our works ; but never faith we shall be judged by our faith ; which seems to make a great difference between being justified and being judged : for we are justified without works, and judged by our works, justified by faith without works, but not judged, not acquitted and rewarded, by faith without works ; to be justified, and to be judged, cannot signify the same thing.

Thus, when we are said to be *justified by faith*, some, by *faith*, understand such a firm and steadfast belief of the whole gospel, of all that concerns the person and mediation of Christ, the expiation of his

blood, his resurrection from the dead, and intercession for us in heaven, his laws, his promises and threatenings, as renews and sanctifies our nature, governs our lives, conquers the world, subdues the flesh to the spirit, and makes us truly divine and godlike creatures, the sons of God, not merely by external relation, but by a participation of his nature.

Now, this notion of justifying faith, that we shall be justified by a living, working faith, is very reconcileable with being judged by our works; for if we cannot be justified by faith without works, if no faith can justify but that which is fruitful in all good works, then we may be judged by our works, since holiness is essential to a justifying faith.

Others, by a *justifying faith*, understand "a reliance and recumbency on Christ for salvation, a receiving and embracing Christ, and rowling their souls on him," as they are pleased to express it, which, when taken out of a metaphor, can signify no more than to hope and trust in Christ that he will save them, and to be willing to be saved by him without any works and righteousness of their own. Now, if the bare act of relying on Christ would justify and save men, I cannot see how such believers should be judged by their works, though infidels may; but this Antinomian conceit of justifying faith is not so plain and certain as it is that we shall be judged by our works: not to dispute the point now, these men may be mistaken in their notion of justifying faith; but there can be no dispute made what the meaning is of being judged according to our works.

Thus, when we are said to be *justified by faith*, in opposition to justification by works, it is matter of controversy what is meant by works. Some think that when works are rejected, as contributing nothing to our justification, the Apostle means only the works of the ceremonial law, such as circumcision and sacrifices, washings and purifications, the observation of new moons and sabbaths, &c. for this was the great dispute St. Paul had with the Jews, whether the observation of the Mosaical law were necessary to the justification of Christians; and in this sense the Apostle, with good reason, asserts our justification by faith without works. We are now justified by the faith of Christ, not by the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaical law.

Others, and with very good reason too, not only reject the works of the ceremonial law, but also of the moral law, from the justification of sinners; not as if sinners could be justified without good works, but that they are not justified by them; that is, that no man is justified by the merit of his own works, but by the merit and expiation of the death of Christ: but though no man is justified or saved for the merit of his works, yet he may be judged according to his works. Though no man shall be saved by the merit of his good works, yet no

man shall be saved without good works, and wicked men shall be damned for their evil works; which leaves room enough for our being judged according to our works.

So that, though we be not justified by works, but by faith, as St. Paul tells us, yet we must be judged by our works. Wicked men shall be condemned for their wickedness, and none but good men shall be justified and saved by the merits of Christ; and who are wicked, and who are righteous, shall, at the last day, be judged by their works.

And, indeed, this is plainly confessed by those who contend most zealously for justification by faith alone, which makes this a very needless and impertinent controversy, as appears from their way of reconciling St. Paul and St. James: St. Paul tells us, "we are justified by faith without the works of the law;" St. James tells us, that "by works a man is justified, and not by faith only," *chap. ii. 15*. To reconcile these two great apostles, they tell us, that man is justified by faith, and his faith is justified by works; now, whether this be the true way of reconciling St. Paul and St. James I shall not at present dispute, but it grants all that I desire, that, notwithstanding our being justified by faith, we shall be judged by our works; for whether a man or his faith be judged and justified by works, I think is the same thing; for if the man must be justified by faith, and his faith justified by works, I doubt the man cannot be justified without works, unless he can be justified by an unjustified faith. Before faith can justify the man, it must be justified itself, and faith must be justified by works, and what this differs from judging a believer by his works I cannot tell. So that as many disputes as there are about justification by faith, we ought firmly to believe that we shall be judged by our works; for most of the notions of justification by faith in opposition to our justification by works are very reconcileable with this doctrine of being judged by our works; and those that are not, are not so plain and certain as it is that we shall be judged by our works.

3. However, since this is so plainly expressed in Scripture, that there is no avoiding it, nor any other possible sense to be made of it; whatever our notions of justification be, it is much the safest way to believe and expect that we shall be judged according to our works; that if we live wickedly we shall certainly be condemned at that day, and though we shall be acquitted and finally absolved by the mercies of God, and the merits of Christ, yet not without holiness, not without good works, not without partaking of the Divine nature, and being conformed to Christ our Head. To entertain any other hopes will undo us for ever; for we shall be very ill prepared to give an account of our lives and actions when our Lord comes to call us to an account, if we can possess ourselves with such notions of justification as deliver

us from the fears of judgment; if we can persuade ourselves that we shall not be judged according to our works, but by the merits of Christ, that we shall not receive the things done in the body, whether good or evil; but shall receive the purchase of Christ's obedience and righteousness without regard to our own.

These are the dangerous conclusions which some men draw from their mistaken notions of justification, and this is the great danger of such mistakes. While men acknowledge the grace of God, and the merits of Christ, in the justification of sinners, and believe that they shall be judged according to their works, whatever other disputes there may be there is no danger in them; but if men, by some uncertain reasonings, can persuade themselves against the express declarations of Scripture, that they shall not be judged according to their works, this will make them careless of a holy life; and then, when Christ comes to judgment, how orthodox believers soever they are, he will say unto them, "I know you not; depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

II. But whatever notions we have of grace, nothing is more plain, from the very nature of things, than that the righteousness of the future judgment consists "in judging men according to their works;" and therefore, if God judge the world in righteousness, he must judge every man according to his works.

For, 1st, The righteousness of the future judgment consists in rewarding good men, and punishing the wicked, and in rewarding and punishing none else: now, there is no other distinction between good and bad men but what their works make: he is a good man who does good; and he is a wicked man who does that which is wicked: as St. John tells us; "Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous: he that committeth sin is of the devil," 1 John iii. 7, 8.

The nature of righteousness is certain and unchangeable, and cannot alter with men's opinions of it: it is our likeness and conformity to God to be righteous as he is righteous; and therefore is as immutable as the Divine nature. God may change the natures, and make a wicked man holy by the power of his grace, but he cannot change the nature of virtue and vice no more than he can change his own nature. He cannot make a wicked man to be a saint while he lives wickedly, nor a saint to be a wicked man while he lives in the practice of holiness and virtue. The nature of good and evil cannot be changed; and therefore a good man cannot be wicked, nor a wicked man good, without changing their natures; and God cannot account a wicked man righteous, nor a righteous man wicked, without judging contrary to the nature of things.

It would be impossible for wicked men, did they duly consider this,

to flatter themselves that God will so impute the righteousness of Christ to them, as to account them perfectly righteous, without any inherent righteousness of their own, or without doing righteously: for when they know themselves to be so far from being righteous, that they are very wicked, why should they think that God will judge of them otherwise than they are? that he "will call good evil, and evil "good; light darkness, and darkness light; sweet bitter, and bitter "sweet," when he himself has pronounced a woe against those who do it, *Iſa. v. 20*. I am sure a righteous judgment is to judge of things as they are, to judge good to be good, and evil to be evil; to judge the tree by the fruit; that a good tree is that which bringeth forth good fruit, and an evil tree which bringeth forth corrupt fruit.

This is truth and righteousness in judging of the natures of things; and righteousness in judging, as that signifies rewarding and punishing, is to reward and punish men according to their natures, qualities, and deserts; to reward those, and those only, who do such things as deserve a reward, or at least as make them capable of being rewarded; and to punish those who do such things as deserve punishment; for to give every man his deserts is to judge righteously.

All this is very plain; and it is as plain that righteousness and virtue deserve a reward, and wickedness deserves to be punished; and therefore a just and righteous judge must reward good men, and punish the wicked. This all mankind agree in; they have no other notion of judging righteously but this, to reward the good, and to punish the wicked; but to bless and prosper and reward the wicked, and to punish the good, is, without dispute, confessed to be unjust. Some men dispute the essential difference between good and evil; but all confess, that what we call Good deserves praise and reward, and what we call Evil deserves punishment; and this distinction between good and evil the laws of all nations make; and if this be accounted a righteous judgment among men, if God will judge the world, and judge in righteousness, he also must judge men according to their works, unless he means something else by judging righteously than what mankind understand by it.

And thus he has every where declared he will do, as I need not prove to those who have read the Scripture. All the threatenings, both of the law and the gospel, are against the workers of iniquity; all the promises are made to holiness and obedience; and if this be the rule of righteousness and justice, it must be the rule also of a righteous judgment; for to judge righteously is to judge by the rule of righteousness.

Now, if this be a righteous judgment to reward or punish men according to the good or evil they have done, how can God judge the

world in righteousness if he does not judge men according to their works? if he should acquit the wicked, and bestow heaven on them, or condemn any good man to hell? For will any man say this is just? and therefore let the grace of the gospel be what it will, if it cannot make a wicked man righteous without doing righteousness, it can never make it just for God to save a wicked and ungodly man. The grace of God cannot change the natures of things; righteousness and justice is the same thing under the gospel that it was under the law, and therefore to judge righteously is the same thing too, and that always did, and always will, signify to judge men according to their works; to judge those righteous men who do righteousness, and those wicked men who do wickedness; and to reward the righteous, and punish the wicked.

2dly, The righteousness of the future judgment consists in the equality of it, to deal equally by all men. Now, there is no other equal rule of judgment but to judge men by their works, for there is nothing else for which all mankind can be judged; for if some men must be judged for the good or evil of their actions, and equal justice requires that all men be judged by the same rule, men must either be judged by their works, or by their knowledge or their faith: as for knowledge and faith, it is evident that men's natural capacities, and the circumstances of their lives, and fortunes, and educations, which are not of their own chusing, and therefore cannot be imputed to them, make a very great difference. One man has naturally a better understanding, a quicker apprehension, a more piercing judgment, than another; or if their natural abilities be equal, yet the circumstances of their fortunes and education make a difference. One is better instructed, trained up in the art of thinking, and reasoning, and judging, and has leisure and opportunity to improve his knowledge by study; while another, as capable as he, is either ill taught or not taught at all, or only taught the art of living in the world by labour and industry: that God might as well judge men for being rich or poor, when their fortune is not at their own disposal, but owing to their birth, or to prosperous or adverse events of Providence, as to judge men by the different degrees and improvements of knowledge.

Thus, as for faith, some never heard of Christ at all, or, if they did, it was only under the character of an impostor, or a fable, but never had the true reasons of faith explained to them; others have been very ill instructed in the faith of Christ, and never had opportunity to rectify their mistakes; and yet, as no man is bound to know what Nature does not teach, unless it be revealed to him, so no man is bound to believe what he has not so much as heard of, nor to believe every thing he does hear without sufficient evidence; nor to receive the true faith

of Christ which he was never taught; so that, should God divide the world at the last day only into believers and infidels, this would be a very unequal distribution, because great part of the world never had the faith of Christ preached to them; and though infidelity will condemn those men who have been instructed in the faith of Christ, and would not believe, yet it cannot in reason and justice be imputed to those men who never heard of Christ.

But now the being and providence of God, and the differences of good and evil, are known to all mankind; Nature teaches this, and therefore all mankind are bound to know it, and all mankind may be judged by this rule, Whether they know God and worship him as God, and take care to do that which is good, and to avoid the evil. This account St. Paul gives us of it: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them: for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened," *Rom. i. 18,—21.* And the same Apostle tells us, that "the Gentiles which have not the law, (no divine written law) do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another," *Rom. ii. 14, 15.*

So that all mankind, even Heathens themselves, have a natural knowledge of God, and of good and evil, and therefore may be judged for what they know, and condemned by God for transgressing those laws of righteousness for which their own consciences condemn them, for this leaves them without excuse. And if God will judge the Heathens by their works, and condemn them for those sins they commit against the light of nature, an equal justice requires that Christians shall be judged by their works also: for is it equal to damn a Heathen for those sins which a Christian may commit and be saved? Will equal and impartial justice allow, that when a Heathen and a Christian are equally wicked, the Christian shall be saved and the Heathen damned? Is not this to accept the persons of men in judgment? to make a difference between the men, when there is no difference in their actions? and yet the same Apostle tells us, "There is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish with-

"out law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law," *Rom. ii. 11, 12.* And that this is the rule of judgment, "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to the gospel," *ver. 16.*

There is no other common and general rule, whereby all mankind can be judged but only this, to render to every man according to his works; for there is nothing else for which men must be judged that is common to all men but the natural knowledge of God, and the differences of good and evil. Christians indeed know more than the light of nature taught Heathens, and therefore have more to account for than Heathens have; but if Heathens shall be condemned for their sins against the light of nature, if they shall be judged according to their works, Christians have more reason to expect this: for if God be a righteous and impartial Judge, he cannot condemn one sinner for his sins and save another as wicked as he. The nature of virtue and vice is the same in all mankind, whether Heathens, Jews, or Christians, and deserves in itself the same rewards and punishments; if it be righteous in God to punish the sins of Heathens, it is righteous in God to punish the same sins of Christians; to render to all men, whoever they be, according to their works, for this is to deal equally with all men.

3^{dly}, I add farther, that nothing else is the proper object of judgment but the good or evil of our actions, and therefore if we be judged at all, we must be judged for the good or evil we have done.

For does judging signify any thing else but examining what good or evil such a man hath done, and rewarding or punishing him according to the good or evil he has done? and therefore a righteous judge cannot judge men, cannot reward or punish them, for that which is neither good nor evil.

Now, is there any thing good or evil but virtue or vice? What is knowledge good for, which does not direct and govern our lives? what is faith good for, which does not renew and sanctify us? Are there not very knowing and believing devils? Does not faith and knowledge make every sin we commit against faith, and against knowledge, the more inexcusable? does not our Saviour tell us, "That he who knows his master's will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes?"

What merit or virtue is there in a presumptuous reliance on Christ for salvation, to "call him Lord, Lord, and not to do the things which he has commanded?"

And can we think then that God will reward us for our knowledge, or our faith, and overlook all the evils and impurities of our lives? Will he reward us for that which deserves no reward? and not punish us for that which deserves punishment? Is this to judge the world in righteousness?

This is abundantly enough to prove, that we must be judged according to our works, that we must receive the things done in this body, whether good or evil, since the righteousness of the future judgment makes this necessary.

III. Let us then consider how this matter may be reconciled, that we are saved by grace, and justified by faith in Christ, and yet must be judged by our works. And this is very easily done, for we shall be judged by our works, according to the gracious terms of the gospel.

The faith of Christ was never intended to give us a liberty in sinning, or to excuse us from the necessity of a holy life; and as far as the necessity of holiness is reconcileable with the grace of the gospel, so far our being judged by our works is reconcileable with our being saved by grace; upon the same terms that the gospel promises pardon and forgiveness, we shall be pardoned at the day of judgment; whatever the gospel promises to reward, shall be rewarded at the day of judgment; and thus we are judged by grace, and by works too. This is easily understood by those who know any thing of the gospel of Christ, and therefore I shall at present but just mention it.

The gospel of Christ promises pardon of sin to true penitents, who are heartily sorry for their sins, abhor themselves for them, make restitution for the injuries they have done to men, beg God's pardon in the name and mediation of Christ, and amend their lives; for Christ has made atonement and expiation for such sinners, and therefore at the day of judgment no man shall be condemned for such sins as he heartily repented of and reformed: and this is to be judged by grace as well as by our works; for the law prescribes our duty, but promises no pardon, no, not to penitents; this is owing to the grace of God, through the merits and mediation of Christ. But though the grace of the gospel pardons true penitents, yet the same gospel threatens eternal damnation against impenitent sinners. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness," *Rom. i. 18*. "To them who are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil," *Rom. ii. 8, 9*. And therefore impenitent sinners will be judged and condemned for their sins at the last day by the Mediator of the covenant of grace, for the gospel itself condemns them.

Thus, "the grace of God that bringeth salvation, and hath appeared unto all men, teaches us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present world," *Tit. ii. 11, 12*. and therefore, "without holiness no man shall see God." Heaven is the reward only of good men, who live

in the exercise of all Christian graces and virtues, and therefore good men must be judged, must be rewarded according to their works, and yet this is gospel-grace too: for such a glorious reward as heaven is above the merit of the most perfect virtue in this world. The best men cannot challenge such a reward from the justice of God, and therefore it is owing to gospel-grace: "The wages of sin is death, but eternal life is the gift of God, (not the merit and desert of our works), through our Lord Jesus Christ," *Rom. vi. 23*. Especially when we consider that this great and perfect reward is bestowed upon a very imperfect virtue; the obedience of the best man is very defective, stained, and sullied with human weaknesses, indecent surprizes of passion, or coldness and flatness of devotion, and too often interrupted with wilful and scandalous sins; such as nothing but grace can pardon, and therefore much more nothing but grace can reward. And therefore good men are judged by grace, and rewarded by grace, though according to their works.

We are all sinners, we are all obnoxious to the justice of God, would he be extreme to mark what is done amiss: but since a perfect virtue is not to be expected from mankind in this lapsed state, God is pleased to accept of sincerity instead of perfection, and, through the merits of Christ, and faith in his blood, to account him a righteous man who sincerely loves and fears him, and obeys his laws, though with the weaknesses and infirmities incident to human nature. So that our being judged by our works signifies no more but that we are distinguished, by the good or evil we do, into good or bad men, according to the favourable allowances of the gospel; and then bad men receive their just desert of their sins, and good men receive those rewards, not which they have merited, but which the grace of God, and the merits of Christ, have prepared and purchased for them.

This is a plain account how Christians may be judged by their works, and yet saved by grace, and by faith in Christ: and the righteousness and equity of the last judgment seems to entitle Heathens themselves (though they have no covenant-right to it) to some degrees of this grace. For I cannot think that God, in judging the world, will deal more rigorously and severely with Heathens than he will with Christians; that he will demand most where he has given least, which is contrary to our Saviour's rule of judgment: and therefore I cannot but hope that Christ, in judging of their works, will make the same favourable allowances to them which the gospel makes to those who do believe in Christ; that is to say, that he will allow of the repentance of a Heathen, if it were sincere and hearty, and did reform his life, as well as of the repentance of a Christian; that he will overlook the same defects and imperfections in the good actions of Heathens

who lived virtuous lives, who worshipped the one true God, and observed the natural rules of sobriety, justice, and righteousness, that he will in the actions of Christians. That if any Heathen should be found equally virtuous with the meanest Christian who shall be finally saved, that Heathen at least will not be damned; and indeed would seem to have reason to complain of unequal usage if he should. St. Paul tells us, both with respect to Jews and Heathens, as well as Christians, that "God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to the gospel;" and if the gospel be the rule of judging all men's actions, they must be all equally judged with respect to the good or evil of their actions, and be judged as the gospel judges.

I grant, the Heathens had no promise of pardon upon their repentance; but yet all mankind believed so well of the goodness and mercy of God, that they hoped for pardon upon their repentance. Thus we find the Ninevites did, and they had it. And indeed it was this persuasion that taught them to pray to God, and to offer sacrifices; which had been insignificant things, had they not been persuaded that God both could and would pardon sin when sinners repent.

Nor have the Heathens any covenant-title to salvation, and yet they were generally persuaded that good men shall be rewarded, and the wicked punished, in the next world; and their consciences did either condemn or absolve, terrify or comfort, them, as ours do us: which are very vain hopes, if there be no reward for them, though they should observe the laws of virtue.

St. Peter tells us what he had learnt from the case of Cornelius, a Roman Centurion, but a devout worshipper of God, and one who gave much alms: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him," *Acts* x. 34, 35. What does St. Peter mean? That God will accept Heathens, who are perfectly innocent and righteous, and never committed any sin? He knew very well there were no such men in the world, much less among the Heathens; and therefore he must mean, that God will accept of all honest sincere worshippers of him, though guilty of many human frailties, of what nation soever they be.

It is true, no man's sins shall be forgiven, nor his virtue rewarded, but for the sake of Christ, who is the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;" for "there is no other name given unto men, whereby they can be saved, but only the name of Christ:" but if all who should be saved from the beginning to the end of the world shall be saved by Christ, as it is certain they must be, if there be no other name whereby men can be saved, it is to be hoped that many thousands will be saved by Christ at the day of judgment who never had any

explicit knowledge or faith in him. For though I grant God promised a Saviour to men immediately after the fall, and renewed this promise to Abraham, and afterwards to David, and prefigured him in the types and sacrifices of the law; yet repentance and forgiveness of sins was never publicly preached in his name till he gave that commission to the apostles, after his resurrection from the dead. And how little the Jews understood of the nature or office of the Messiah is very plain, from the ignorance of Christ's own disciples and apostles, who expected that he should be a temporal prince and saviour; and understood so little of his being a sacrifice for sin, or of their being saved through faith in his blood, that St. Peter himself could not with any patience hear of his dying; and when he was put to death, his disciples thought all their great hopes and expectations from him utterly disappointed, till they saw him again, after he was risen from the dead. So that those good men, even among the Jews, who lived before Christ's appearing in the world, though they had the promises of the Messiah, yet do not seem to have had any explicit knowledge what kind of Saviour the Messiah was to be, nor by what means he should save us; though the types, and figures, and promises of the law seem very plain to us now, since Christ expounded them to his disciples, and they to us: and therefore they could not be saved by such a faith in Christ's blood as is now required from us; for they did not know that he was to save us by the merits and expiation of his death. And if those good men might be saved by the blood of Christ, who had no knowledge of his dying for our sins, and therefore no explicit faith in his blood, why not those also who had never heard of Christ, if they lived so as to be capable of salvation? For that promise of a Saviour made to Adam immediately after the fall, that "the Seed of the woman" should break the serpent's head," was in him made to all mankind who descend from his loins.

And though Christ has not been preached to all ages, nor to all parts of the world, yet he is the Judge of all men, and he judges as Mediator between God and man, as I observed before; and therefore judges all mankind, not by the rules of strict and rigorous justice, (for that is not the office of the Mediator), but by the mercy and equity of the gospel.

This makes a very fair representation of the equal justice, righteousness, and mercy of the last judgment; that no man shall perish merely for the misfortune of his birth; that he lived before Christ was preached to the world, or in such countries where Christ was never preached; but though the gospel was never preached to him, yet he shall be judged by gospel grace; and if he were a true penitent, and a sincere worshipper of God, shall have liberty to plead his repentance,

and the sincerity of his obedience, at the tribunal of Christ, when he comes to judgment; which will be so undeniable a justification of the righteousness of the last judgment, that, were there no other reason for it, it would mightily incline any man who thinks honourably of God to believe it.

And this will teach all Christians what I am sure some have great need to be taught, that the benefit they receive by the knowledge and faith of Christ is not to be saved upon easier terms than the rest of the world; for it will appear at the day of judgment, that a great deal more is expected from them than from ignorant Heathens: but the true benefit of having the gospel preached to them is, that they are more perfectly instructed in the will of God, and the means of salvation; have more express revelations of the rewards and punishments of the next life; have more express promises of pardon and forgiveness; are delivered from the cheats and impostures of evil spirits, and have the powerful assistances of the divine grace; that is, all the helps, advantages, encouragements, and obligations, to improve in Christian graces and virtues, to avoid the threatened miseries, and to obtain the glorious rewards of the next life. This is an inestimable advantage, which we Christians enjoy above Jews or Heathens, which, if we improve well, we cannot fail of being happy for ever; we may, by diligence and caution, make our calling and election sure. These great advantages the Heathen world wanted, and therefore were over-ran with idolatry, and all manner of wickedness, and seldom saw any great examples of virtue to shame them, or teach them better. This is a great difference God has put between us and the Heathen world; and we need not envy them as favourable a judgment as we hope to have ourselves, for certainly they want it more; and therefore it becomes the righteous and merciful Judge of the world to give it them.

Thus we see in general by what rule we shall be judged, and the righteousness of such a judgment; but there are some things which, though they have been briefly mentioned before, deserve a more particular consideration.

As 1. Though we shall be judged for all the good or evil we have done, yet our Saviour, in describing the process of the last judgment, makes no mention of any thing but acts of charity: *Matth. xxv. 34, &c.* When he shall have separated the sheep from the goats, and set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left; "then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison,

“ and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord; when saw we thee an hungred, or a-thirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.” This is so remarkable a difference which our Saviour makes between charity and all other graces, that it concerns us to take notice of it, and to inquire what the meaning of it is.

1st, Now, in the first place, There is no doubt but our Saviour's intention in this was very powerfully to recommend all acts of charity to us, since heaven is the peculiar reward of charity; and to make us as much afraid of all uncharitableness as we are of any other, the most enormous and flagitious crimes, since uncharitableness will damn us, though we were guilty (if that were possible) of no other sin.

And there is great reason to enforce this duty on us, because few men have so great a sense of the necessity and obligations of charity as they have of moral honesty and justice. All mankind have a natural sense of the great evil of rapine, and injustice, and murder; to defraud men of their estates, or to take them by force and violence; to oppress the poor, the fatherless, and the widow, or to murder the innocent; their consciences terrify and scare them with such guilt; but they have but little sense of the obligations to charity, and of the great sin and danger of uncharitableness; they can see men hungry, and thirsty, and naked, and sick, and in prison, without ministering to them: and though they will acknowledge such acts of charity to be very good and commendable, yet charge themselves with no guilt for neglecting them: but if none shall be saved at the last day but the kind and the charitable; if we shall be condemned at the last day to that everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels for doing no good, tho' we should do no other evil, as we certainly shall, if our Saviour gives us a true account of the process of the last judgment; this, if any thing, will make men sensible how necessary it is to do all the good they can,

as necessary as it is to go to heaven; that they may as safely, with respect to another world, rob and steal, and cheat and oppress, as not relieve the wants of the poor, as far as Christian prudence and charity directs; for they shall be damned for this as well as for the greatest injustice.

2dly, Our Saviour hereby signifies, that this divine charity is the perfection of all other Christian graces and virtues, and comprehends them all; for it is certain that no man shall be saved without an universal righteousness, and yet our Saviour inquires only after charity, as the only mark and criterion of an universal righteousness; for where that is in sincerity, there is a combination of all other graces. Our Saviour tells us, that the love of God and men is the sum of the whole law and the prophets, *Matth. xxii. 36, — 40.*; and St Paul tells us, "He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law, — Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law," *Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10.*

He that loves his neighbour, will do him no hurt, but will do him all the good he can. And this divine love of men results from the love of God, whose creatures they are, whose image they bear, and therefore includes the love of God as its cause; for there is no other principle of universal love and charity, though of particular friendships there is: and therefore St. John makes this the trial of our love to God: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also," 1 *John iv. 20, 21.* Thus much is certain from this text, that no man loves God who does not love his brother: and I believe there never was an instance of true universal charity without the love of God: but not to make a dispute of that, (since humanity, and greatness and generosity of mind, will, in some men, very nearly resemble and counterfeit an universal charity), the charity our Saviour speaks of is this divine charity, which flows from the love of God and Christ, when we love men for God's sake, and Christians as the members and the brethren of Christ; and therefore he accounts all the kindness shown to them for his sake as done to himself: "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

This divine charity contains the exercise of all other Christian graces; where this is, no other grace is wanting: it is the universal habit of grace, the very nature of God; for "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him," 1 *John iv. 7, — 12.*

But, on the other hand, an uncharitable man can have no good in him, and he has the seeds and principles of all evil. Uncharitableness

is owing to self-love, and to the love of this world; and where these two are there can be no good, but there may be all the wickedness that human nature is capable of.

So that this brings the matter to a short issue at the day of judgment, as our Saviour has here represented it: in order to our final doom and sentence there needs but this one inquiry, whether we were charitable or uncharitable? for a man who is possessed with this true divine charity has all Christian graces; a man who has not this divine principle has no good in him, and that is enough to damn him, without inquiring what evil he has done.

It concerns us all seriously to consider this; for if all uncharitable men shall certainly be damned, charity is the only certain mark whereby we can judge of our future state. Whatever other good qualities we seem to have, if we be not charitable, there is nothing good in us, nothing that God will accept or reward; we shall be condemned to the fire prepared for the devil and his angels with all our other glittering and counterfeit virtues; but if, to our other virtues, we add an universal charity, we may then joyfully and securely expect to hear from our Lord, when he comes to judgment, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." I say, if to our other virtues we add charity; for if we live in any wilful sin, how liberal and bountiful soever we are to the poor, this is not charity. St Paul supposes, that men may give "their bodies to be burnt, and all their goods to feed the poor, without charity," *1 Cor. xiii. 4*. And tho' our Saviour only mentions the external acts of charity, in feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, and visiting the sick and the prisoners, because he will not allow of the pretence of charity without charitable actions, yet he supposes that these charitable actions flow from a true principle of divine charity, from the love of God and men, which it is certain those men have not who allow themselves in any wickedness. And therefore the plain state of the case is this; whatever other virtues we pretend to without charity will avail us nothing at the day of judgment; for the uncharitable man shall certainly be condemned, though he were guilty of no other crime; that how charitable soever we are to the poor, in all the external acts and expressions of charity, this will avail us nothing, unless we discharge all the other duties and offices of religion; because, where there is not an universal regard to the divine laws, there are charitable actions without this divine principle of charity; but when men have a respect to all the laws of God, and exercise themselves in all the acts of kindness and charity to men, they unite the principle and practice, and have that divine charity which our Lord will reward with the kingdom of heaven.

3dly, This is a manifest proof that the rewards of good men at the day of judgment are wholly owing to the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ; which confirms what I have already discoursed, that we are judged by grace as well as by our works.

Christ has made atonement and expiation for our sins; he has reconciled us to God by his death, and that puts us into a capacity of happiness; but the reason our Saviour gives, why he adjudges good men to the kingdom of heaven, proves, that the reward is of grace, not of debt. The only reason he assigns is the kindness they have shown to himself: "When I was an hungred, ye fed me; when I was thirsty, ye gave me drink; when I was naked, ye clothed me; when I was sick, ye visited me; when I was in prison, ye came unto me."

1st, Now in the first place, It is great kindness and grace to man that he should reckon all acts of kindness done to men done to himself: that glorious Being, who needs nothing that we can do for him; from whom we receive the power and ability of doing any kindness; and yet, "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

2dly, And therefore he bestows heaven upon them as a reward of their kindness to himself. Now we all know the difference between rewarding kindnesses and paying debts, or rewarding men according to their deserts.

In rewarding kindnesses, we reward their love, not their works; we do not consider what the actual service was, whether small or great; but what the kindness and affection was that did it. If the kindness and affection was great, which would have done greater things if it could, the affection is valued and rewarded, though not the work; as our Saviour tells us, That "whoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward," *Mat. x. 42.*; and the Apostle tells us, that "where there is a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, not according to what he hath not," *2 Cor. viii. 12.* But still it is grace which values and rewards the affection, which is not considered at all in making a bargain, which is so much work for so much pay.

And therefore, in rewarding kindnesses, we have no regard to proportions, as we have in paying debts, or rewarding services. If we pay what we owe, that is all that justice requires; if we pay a labourer according to our contract with him, or according to the common estimation of his labour, this is all that is expected; but there is no rule, no proportion, in rewarding kindnesses; where men do not traffic for kindnesses, (which is justly thought the most sordid spirit in the world), the

least external expression of kindness we can show may have the greatest return, and no man blames prodigality or excess in such returns.

And thus it is here; our Saviour rewards our kindness, not our work, and that makes such a vast disproportion between the work and the reward, between some few acts of kindness done to men and the eternal glories of the kingdom of God. No works we can do can deserve such a reward; but when Christ rewards our kindness, not our works, the reward must bear proportion to his own grace, not to our deserts; he may reward as liberally as he pleases; for when the reward is of grace, not of debt, no reward can be too great for infinite Grace to bestow, though it may be too great for our works to deserve.

But this still convinces us, that heaven cannot be the merit of our works, but the reward of our charity. Works have a stinted merit, and the best actions we can do cannot merit heaven; but grace may reward charity as it pleases, and nothing but charity has any title to the rewards of grace; which justifies our Saviour's account of the future judgment, which assigns no other reason of bestowing heaven upon good men but only their charity: for works bear no proportion to such a reward; and grace can reward nothing but charity, all our acts of kindness to men, out of love to God, and our Saviour Christ. All the expressions of our love to God and our Saviour Christ may be rewarded by grace, as we reward the kindnesses which are shown to us without regard to the merit of the work; but we must do something to reconcile the love and favour of God to us before we can expect the rewards of grace; and there is no other way, if I may so speak, of obliging God, but by doing good to men for God's sake. This I take to be a very reasonable account of the great rewards of good men, so vastly disproportioned to their works; and very agreeable to our Saviour's account of the future judgment, that God rewards our love and charity, not our works, which make the reward not a debt, but of grace, which has no proportion but what grace, the infinite love and goodness of God, will give it; which lays all manner of obligations on us to be very charitable; for if we would be rewarded by grace, if we would be rewarded for kindnesses, we must show kindness.

3d/y, Our Saviour's account of the future judgment, with reference to the final sentence of uncharitable men, justifies the righteousness of it to all mankind. For how can sinners be saved but by grace? and what title have those to grace and mercy who will show none?

Is there any thing in the world more hateful to mankind, or which all men think more deserves punishment, than ill-nature? And if God damn men only for their ill-nature, will not all mankind justify the righteousness of his judgments? will such men find any apologies?

may, can they apologize for themselves? And what is uncharitableness but ill-nature? what cruelty and barbarity is it to see men want food and clothes, and all the necessaries of life, (when we are satisfied the wants are real, not counterfeit, nor to indulge their idleness and luxury), and not relieve them? If nothing but ill-nature shall be damned, nothing but ill-nature can complain of God, and there is no scandal in that.

But we must consider mankind as sinners, obnoxious to the judgments of God, who must be pardoned before they are rewarded: now, when both the pardon and the reward is wholly of grace and mercy, has that man any title to either who will show no mercy; it is reasonable to expect that God, in mere grace and kindness, should bestow heaven upon that man, who will not give a morsel of bread, nor a cup of drink, to the poor and necessitous for God's sake? Do men deal thus with one another? do we think that man deserves any kindness who will show none? that he should be fed and clothed when he is in want, who would never feed and clothe others? that he should be forgiven who would never forgive?

Unless sinners be saved by grace, they can never be saved; for it is grace must forgive those sins which justice would punish. It is grace which must bestow heaven on us, which is a reward too big for our best works to deserve, and therefore too big for justice to give. If our sins be not pardoned, we must sink into hell; and if we have no title to the grace of God, which alone can forgive sins, they can never be pardoned: and this gives a plain account, how uncharitableness must necessarily damn us; for an uncharitable man has no right to the grace of God: innocence may challenge impunity, and meritorious works may challenge a reward; but nothing but kindness can challenge kindness. And as a sinner cannot merit heaven, so an unmerciful and uncharitable man does not deserve to have it given him, and if heaven be not given him he can never have it; if his sins be not pardoned by grace justice must lay hold on him, and sentence him to everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

This is agreeable to the reason of mankind; it is what all men approve, what all men justify. When it shall appear at the last day that though other sins have deserved hell, yet it is only our uncharitableness that hinders our pardon, and brings the sentence of condemnation on us; all mouths will be stopped before God; sinners themselves must confess the righteousness of it; their own consciences must tell them, that they have deserved no mercy, because they have shown none: and therefore we find, in the account our Saviour gives us of it, that when he condemned these uncharitable men to hell, they made no exception against the righteousness of the sentence, but only deny the fact: "Lord,

"when saw we thee hungry, or thirsty, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" Though mercy, and compassion, and forgiveness, becomes the God of love, yet it does not unbecome Love itself, infinite Love, to condemn ill-nature to everlasting fire; and there is nothing else which eternal and infinite Love will finally condemn and punish.

And this gives a plain account why forgiveness of sins is promised to no other particular grace and virtue but to mercy and charity: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy," *Matth. v. 7*. And the Psalmist tells us that "with the merciful, God will shew himself merciful, but with the froward he will shew himself froward," *Psal. xviii. 25, 26*. Our Saviour has taught us to pray for forgiveness upon the condition of our forgiving those who trespass against us; "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses," *Matth. vi. 14, 15*. Which our Saviour represents at large in the parable of the King, who called his servants to an account; and finding one who owed him ten thousand talents, and had nothing to pay, he commands him, and his wife and children, to be sold, and payment to be made; but, upon his earnest importunity, forgave him the debt: this servant meets his fellow-servant, who owed him an hundred pence, and cast him into prison; which his lord hearing of, revokes his pardon, and delivers him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. "So likewise," saith our Saviour, "shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses," *Matth. xviii. 23, &c.* Thus St. Peter tells us, that charity, all acts of kindness shown to men, "covereth a multitude of sins," *1 Pet. iv. 8*. And the prophet Daniel advises "Nebuchadnezzar to break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor." Heaven itself is promised to acts of charity: "Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom: for with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured unto you again," *Luke vi. 38*; which plainly signifies the rewards of the next life. This is to "lay up treasures in heaven," *Mat. vi. 20*. to "make to ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting habitations," *Luke xvi. 9*. As our Saviour tells the rich young man, if he would sell all he had, and give to the poor, he should have treasure in heaven, *Mat. xix. 21*. What is the meaning of this? Does the gospel preach merit to us? Must we merit forgiveness by forgiving? must we purchase heaven with our money? Every body sees that this can be no purchase,

because there is no proportion in the value. But though charity cannot merit our pardon, yet it deserves some favour to be shown it, and God will be merciful to those who show mercy. Though our alms and works of charity cannot merit heaven, yet they make us friends, as our Saviour speaks, and such friends as will receive us into everlasting habitations. They will make God and Christ our friend, who will bestow heaven on us, not as the merit of our works, but out of grace and favour, which such acts of charity deserve.

This is a plain account why our Saviour, in the last judgment, takes notice of no other works but acts of charity; and shows us how we may be judged by our works, and pardoned and rewarded by grace: and if this will not convince us of the necessity of charity, it is in vain to urge any other arguments.

2dly, Another rule, and that a very righteous rule of judgment, is, that God will judge us according to our receipts, as our Saviour expressly tells us; "To whom soever much is given, of them shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more," *Luke xii. 48*. As for the righteousness and equity of this, our Saviour appeals to the practice of mankind; they think it very reasonable to ask the more of him to whom they have committed much. And we have no reason to complain of God, if he deals with us as we think is just and reasonable to deal with one another.

There is no need to prove the righteousness of this rule, which all men own and confess; but the consequence of it deserves to be considered by Christians, who have received so much more from God than the rest of mankind have done; for by this rule, at the day of judgment more will be required of us than of the rest of the world, as we have received more.

Very few Christians seem to think of this; they pity the rest of the world, who (they say) are under the law and a covenant of works, by which no man can be justified who is a sinner, as all men are, and therefore their salvation is desperate: but a little matter will save a Christian if he be a true believer; if they are but sorry for their sins, and confess and bewail them before God as often as they commit them, and trust in the merits and righteousness of Christ; nay, if they do but retract their wicked lives with some dying groans, and resolutions of living well, when they know they can live no longer; if they wish they had lived better when they come to die, and promise that they would live better, if they could live over their lives again, this will secure their salvation; and this is the glorious privilege they enjoy by being Christians; this is gospel-grace, this is the purchase of Christ's blood.

But not to enter into this dispute, which I have said enough of already, certainly these men are mistaken, and these vain hopes will de-

ceive them, if our Saviour's rule be true, that "to whom much is given, of them shall be much required." For has not God given more to us than he has to the rest of the world? and is that a reason why he should ask less? Let us briefly consider what God has done more for us than he has done for the rest of the world, and see whether what God has done more for us does excuse us from any part of our duty; or rather, whether it does not exact a more perfect virtue from us.

The gospel of Christ has given us a more perfect knowledge of the will of God, and of our duty to him; nay, has given us a more perfect law and rule of life; has, in many instances, advanced our duty above what the law of Nature or the law of Moses required, at least above what the generality of men thought they did require. Now, is this a reason why God should excuse us from doing our duty, because we know it better than other men? or why God should expect less from us than from other men, because we know more? This is directly contrary to what our Saviour tells us, "That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes: but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes," *Luke xii. 47, 48.* This seems a hard saying, that he which knew not should be beaten at all; but our Saviour does not by this understand a total ignorance, but an imperfect knowledge, which will excuse men from such parts of their duty as they were ignorant of, if this ignorance was not their own fault; but the more we know the more is our duty enlarged; and therefore, as our knowledge increases, our account must increase with it, and that will increase our punishment, if we know the will of God and disobey it. Is there any use of knowledge but to direct our lives? and could God then intend any thing in revealing his will to us but that we should obey it? The Jews had these vain conceits; they boasted in circumcision, and in their knowledge of the law, and condemned the Heathen world for those sins which they themselves securely committed, as if they should be saved in their sins, because they knew the law which forbids them, but the ignorant Heathen should be damned for theirs. But St. Paul very sharply and sarcastically exposes the folly of this, in the second chapter to the Romans, throughout the whole chapter; which I would desire you seriously to read and consider, and then I need add no more about it.

The gospel gives us a more abundant assurance of a future state, and of the rewards and punishments of it, than the world had before; for "life and immortality is brought to light by the gospel." And the more certain our faith and knowledge is of another world, in all reason it may be expected to work more powerfully upon our minds, to conquer all the temptations of this life, to terrify us from every thing

that is wicked; to make "us steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding
 "in the work of the Lord, as knowing that our labour shall not be
 "in vain in the Lord," 1 *Cor.* xv. 58. The certainty of faith is the
 strength and vigour of the mind; and therefore every new degree of
 evidence requires proportionable degrees of resolution, activity, cau-
 tion, and circumspection in doing our duty; and as this is reasonably
 to be expected, so God does expect it from us. "The times of igno-
 "rance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where
 "to repent: Because he hath appointed a day wherein he will judge
 "the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained;
 "whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised
 "him from the dead," *Acts* xvii. 30, 31. While men were ignorant
 of the other world, or had only some uncertain reports of it, mixed
 with fabulous stories to increase and nourish superstition, their wick-
 edness was very pitiable, and shall meet with a more favourable judg-
 ment: but we can now pretend ignorance no longer, and therefore
 now God commands us to repent. Upon this principle it is that our
 Saviour upbraided those cities wherein most of his mighty works
 were done, because they repented not. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin;
 "woe unto thee, Bethsaida: for if the mighty works, which have been
 "done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have
 "repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it
 "shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, in the day of judgment,
 "than for you. And thou Capernaum, who art exalted unto heaven,
 "shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have
 "been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained
 "until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable
 "for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee,"
Matth. xi. 21,—23. Those mighty works our Saviour wrought in
 these cities were such powerful convictions, as rendered their infi-
 delity inexcusable, and that aggravated their condemnation. And for
 the same reason our Saviour threatens that unbelieving generation,
 who saw all his mighty works, and heard his admirable wisdom, which
 was so much beyond whatever was seen or heard before. "The men
 "of Nineveh shall rise in judgment against this generation, and shall
 "condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and
 "behold a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall
 "rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn
 "it; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the
 "wisdom of Solomon; and behold a greater than Solomon is here,"
Luke xii. 41, 42. The greater the preacher is, the greater works he
 does, and the greater evidence he gives of his divine authority, still
 the guilt and condemnation proportionably increases. And then the

infidelity of those who live in a Christian nation, and the wickedness of professed believers, who have so much greater certainty of the rewards and punishments of the next world than either Chorazin, or Bethsaida, or Capernaum, then had, exceeds them all, and their punishments will proportionably exceed.

Thus the gospel has fully acquainted us with the whole dispensation of grace in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life," *John* iii. 16.: that Christ "gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," *Tit.* ii. 14.: that he has made atonement for our sins by his blood: that "herein God hath commended his love towards us, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; that when we were yet enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son," *Rom.* v. 8, 10. And "we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich," *2 Cor.* viii. 9.

Here is a new scene of grace and love opened, which the world was unacquainted with before, which presents us with new arguments, and lays new obligations on us to serve God; arguments and obligations so endearing, so powerful, that one would think human nature could not resist them, could not get loose from them. If we will not reverence the authority of God, yet how can we resist his love? If it be not enough to entitle God to our service that he made us, shall we deny his purchase too? When he has bought us with a price, the inestimable blood of his own Son, ought not "the love of Christ to constrain us?" *2 Cor.* v. 14. Could he do any thing more for us than redeem us from death and hell? could he redeem us at a dearer rate than with his own blood? When he could get nothing by it, but the pleasure and satisfaction of making us happy, and the glory of being the Saviour of sinners? It is a reproach to human nature to think that such love as this should not convert the world, and subdue mankind to the obedience of God. It is plain, this gives God a greater right to us than mere creation, and therefore gives every sin of Christians a double guilt; if Heathens sinned against their Maker, Christians sin against their Maker and their Saviour too. And to sin against love, against suffering, redeeming, forgiving, saving love, is a very different thing from sinning against authority. We may call it folly, or madness, to disobey our Sovereign Lord, who can and will punish our disobedience; but to abuse, to affront, to grieve love, is not the sin of men, though too many men are guilty of it, but of a diabolical nature. I have nothing to say of it, but that it is the greatest provo-

cation in the world, and all men think so; and thus much worse the sins of Christians are than the sins of Heathens.

But the love of God and the grace of Christ are not the only motives and arguments which our redemption by the death of Christ furnishes us with; but there are a great many other, and such powerful ones, as must greatly aggravate our guilt to sin against them.

There is not a greater preservative against sin than to have a just sense of the evil of it, and a thorough conviction of God's irreconcilable hatred and displeasure against it, and that he will certainly punish it. Now, indeed, Nature does in some measure teach this; the reason of mankind condemns it, modesty preserves us from some sins, natural aversion from others, till both the modesty and aversions of nature are conquered by a custom of sinning. But then, on the other hand, the inclinations of flesh and blood very strongly tempt us to some sins, which are very grateful to flesh and blood, and to other sins, to gain opportunities to gratify those inclinations; and when men taste the sweets of sin, and find the present advantages of it, this bribes their reason to speak more favourably of it, and to attribute the shame and aversions of nature to education and popular mistakes.

Thus, though men have a natural sense of God's displeasure against sin, and natural conscience threatens the judgments of God against sinners, yet the experience of the world tells us, that most men flatter themselves that God may be appeased and reconciled to them without forsaking their sins. Not only the Heathens, but even Jews themselves, thought this might be done by their sacrifices, and the other external rites and ceremonies of their religion, as appears from the frequent complaints of the prophets about this matter; and though it cannot be denied but that many Christians deceive themselves with the same vain hopes; yet this is much more unpardonable in them, because God has given a more undeniable proof of the evil of sin, and his irreconcilable displeasure against it, than either Jews or Heathens had. For can there be a more certain evidence of the evil of sin than the death of Christ? He died for sin; and, as the Apostle speaks, "condemned sin in the flesh," *Rom. viii. 3*. Not only condemned sin by his excellent sermons, wise exhortations, sharp reproofs, and terrible threatenings, while he lived in the flesh; but by dying in the flesh, by offering up his body a sacrifice for sin. Whatever Christ suffered, was not upon his own personal account, but for sin; and therefore what he suffered was the just demerit of sin, or else he ought not to have suffered it. In him God shows us what our sins deserve; infamy, reproach, and the utmost scorn and contempt, the agonies of the mind, the pain and torments of the body, and death itself. It was sin that was crucified, that was exposed to all this shame and suffering in the

person of our Saviour; and therefore in his sufferings we have a lively image of the evil and deserts of sin; which is a more convincing and satisfactory evidence than the fine and subtil reasonings of philosophy, which some men cannot understand, and which none but purified minds can feel.

And though God declared his great love to sinners, in giving his own Son to die for them; yet hereby also he expressed his irreconcilable hatred against sin: sinners may be reconciled to God by the death of Christ, but sin never can; that is condemned, is crucified in the death of Christ. Christ expiated sin, and reconciles sinners, by killing and destroying sin, by putting it to shame and death upon his own cross: and this is the method of our reconciliation to God in conformity to the death of Christ; "we must be crucified with Christ, must be planted "into the likeness of his death;" that is, we must crucify sin in us, "we must crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts; we must die "to sin; the body of sin must be destroyed, that we may no longer "serve sin; for he that is dead, is freed from sin;" as St. Paul argues, *Rom. vi.* and in several other places.

And do we need any other proof of God's hatred of sin than that he gave his own Son to be a sacrifice for sin, that Christ could not expiate our sins without undergoing that infamy, and scorn, and pain, and death, which is the desert of sin; that the death and destruction of sin is represented in that very sacrifice which expiates our sins, and must be acted over again in us, in the real crucifixion and death of sin, before we can have any interest in the expiation of Christ's death: and can there be a more powerful dissuasive from sin than this is?

Thus it is a mighty encouragement to repent of our sins and forsake them, to be assured of pardon and forgiveness if we do. Now, whatever reasons Jews and Heathens had to hope for pardon upon their repentance, it is certain they had not that assurance which the death and sacrifice of Christ gives us. We have now an express covenant of grace and pardon sealed with the blood of Christ, who is that "Lamb of "God which taketh away the sins of the world;" and God cannot condemn repenting sinners without denying the purchase of Christ's blood, that "precious blood," of infinite price and value, that blood which our great High Priest hath carried into the Holy of Holies, and which there pleads the pardon of penitent sinners at the throne of grace. God cannot deny himself, cannot deny his own covenant, cannot deny his Son's blood, "which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel;" cannot deny our great High Priest, "who appeareth in the presence of God for us," who died for us, "and now liveth for ever to make intercession for us:" and he who wants greater security than this,

must tell us what greater security sinners can have than the oath and covenant of God, and the blood and intercession of Christ.

When I consider this matter, with what infinite wisdom God has contrived the redemption of sinners, to cure the degeneracy of our natures, and to raise us to a perfect virtue; to bind us faster to himself in those soft and charming fetters of love, to spur us forward with all the zeal and *impetus* that hope, and fear, and indignation, and love, the passion and paroxysms of a divine inflamed love, can give us. It amazes me to think that any Christians should flatter themselves that faith in Christ will save them without works; that there is less need for them to be so exact and circumspect in their lives; that sin is not so damning a thing now, since Christ has made atonement for it, and reconciled God to sinners, as it was before. Had they no Saviour indeed, it would concern them to be very good, when they must merit for themselves; had they not such a meritorious sacrifice for sin, and such a powerful High Priest, it would be a very dangerous thing to commit sin; but now Christ has righteousness and merit enough for us all, and we need none of our own, nothing but faith to apply his righteousness to us. Christ has pulled out the sting of sin, that it cannot greatly hurt, it cannot kill a believer, though it may slightly wound him, and draw some tears of repentance from him, and that heals all again.

This, if any thing in the world, is "to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness," to be wicked because God is good, to "sin because grace does abound; whose damnation is just."

I beseech you, for the love of Christ, and for the honour of his undertaking, of his death and intercession for us, to consider this a little better. Consider what the gospel teaches us to believe of Christ, and how absurd and contradictory it is to say that such a faith will save us, without holiness and purity of heart and life. Do you not believe that "Christ gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and "to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works?" *Tit. ii. 14.*; and is it reasonable to think that our believing this will save us, unless we be *redeemed from all iniquity*, unless we be *purified*, unless we be *a people zealous of good works*? If Christ saves those who are *not redeemed from all iniquity*, who are *not purified*, who are *not zealous of good works*, it is certain he must save those for whom he did not give himself, or must save them contrary to his own intention of giving himself for them; but however, to believe that Christ gave himself for us, *to redeem us from all iniquity*, does not seem to be such a faith (if our faith be true) as will justify us without being redeemed from all iniquity.

I shall add but one thing more, wherein Christians have a great advantage of Jews and Heathens, and have received more from God than

they; I mean the plentiful effusions of the Holy Spirit upon the Christian church. I dare not say that Heathens themselves wanted all internal assistances to virtue; for I can by no means persuade myself that God, who is an infinite Spirit, should for so many ages together have no commerce with men's minds and spirits; that he who governs the inanimate world, who steers the motions of the heavens, and keeps nature in its regular course, should wholly neglect the rational world, and the moral springs of action; should not influence the thoughts and passions of men; should not lay invisible chains on their lusts, nor inspire them with great and virtuous designs, especially since he is a great lover of virtue, and abhors vice, and knows the corruption and wickedness of human nature, without some restraints, and its weakness and indisposition to virtue without divine impulses. I am sure Heathens themselves called virtue the gift of God, and ascribed all extraordinary excellencies and perfections of men to the secret influences and assistances of their gods*.

The Jews had these internal assurances, to illuminate their minds, to influence their wills, to direct their choice, to give warmth and vigour to their affections, as is plain from the Psalms of David, wherein there are many prayers to this purpose, which prove what his belief was: for had he not known that the divine Spirit did use to assist good men, he would not have prayed for such assistance; and yet this he frequently does: "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! With my whole heart have I sought thee, O let me not wander from thy commandments! Blessed art thou, O Lord; O teach me thy statutes. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. I am a stranger upon earth, hide not thy commandments from me. Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: —Strengthen thou me according to thy word. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy precepts.—Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law.—Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn thou mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way," *Psal.* cxix. 5, 10, 14, 18, 19, 27, 28, 34, 35, 36, 37. And in his penitential psalm he prays, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit," *Psal.* li. 10, 12.

But as devout men among the Jews had a greater portion of the Holy Spirit than the Heathens had, so there was still a more plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit on the Christian church, not only in those miraculous gifts and powers which were bestowed upon the apostolic age, and continued in some measure in after-ages, till Christianity was

* Nunquam vir magnus sine Divino afflatu.

well planted in the world, but as to the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. We are now born not only of water but of the Spirit in baptism, *John* iii. 5. "And by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body,—and have been all made to drink into one Spirit," *1 Cor.* xii. 13. So that at baptism we are born of the Spirit, which signifies, that the Holy Spirit gives life, and is a new principle of life to us: in the Lord's supper *we drink into one Spirit*, which signifies the fresh supplies and communications of grace, as we daily receive new supplies of spirits from our natural meat and drink. And I know not how we should have the Spirit in a more perfect manner than as a constant principle of spiritual life.

But it is not my business to prove what all orthodox Christians own, that the Holy Spirit is more plentifully bestowed upon the Christian church than ever it was upon Jews or Heathens, which makes our obedience to the divine laws more easy, by increasing our strength, and exacts from us more perfect attainments; as we all expect more perfect services from our children as their age and strength increases.

All this God has done more for us Christians than he has done for the rest of the world, and all this which he has done more for us makes it our duty to live better, and to do more service for God than other men; and that makes it very just for God to expect more from us, and that proves he does so; and then we should consider "what manner of persons" we Christians "ought to be, in all holy conversation and godliness." If Heathens shall be damned for their sins against the weak and glimmering light of nature, and the feeble convictions of a natural conscience, corrupted by education, by examples, by prevailing customs, by the cheats and impostures of wicked spirits, what shall the condemnation of Christians be, "who neglect so great salvation?" who, when "light is come into the world, love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil?" who sin against the clear and bright light of the gospel, against the love of God, against the grace of Christ, against the powerful restraints and assistances of the Holy Spirit? "If those that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, where-with he was sanctified, an unholy thing; and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" *Heb.* x. 28, 29.; which is true not only of final apostasy, but of all wilful disobedience. The grace of the gospel makes our work easy, but our duty more, and the danger of a miscarriage greater. It does not require unsinning obedience, but it requires greater measures of purity and goodness, and universal righteousness, and has threatened a hotter hell against wicked Christians.

Thus Christians will have a greater account to give than Jews or Heathens, because they have received more; and as the receipts of Christians are very unequal, so their accounts will proportionably differ. Some Christians have but one talent, others two, others five; and as no man shall account for more than he has received, so how much soever we have received, we must account for it all. This needs no proof, and it has been sufficiently explained and applied above.

The CONCLUSION.

How to know what sentence will be at the last Judgment: with an exhortation to reverence our own consciences.

HAVING thus largely discoursed concerning a future judgment, I need not mind you of what concernment it is to know what sentence Christ will pass on us at that day; whether, "Come, ye blessed of my Father;" or, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." For if we must be happy or miserable for ever, how can we content ourselves to live in doubt and suspense which of these shall be our portion? What a hell is this, to live in perpetual fear of hell? How can we sleep, without dreaming of lakes of fire and brimstone, without the frightful apparitions of damned spirits! What a transporting foretaste would it give us of the joys of heaven to read our names written in the book of life! To see a crown, a bright and glorious crown, prepared for us! But how shall we know this? who shall search the records of heaven for us? The answer is plain; we need not ascend up into heaven for it; we have the counterpart of those records in our own breasts; for, as St. John tells us, "If our heart condemn us, God " is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things: Beloved, if our " heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God," 1 John iii. 20, 21.; that is, if our heart or conscience condemn us, then God will condemn us, for he knows more of us than our own consciences know; he knows us better than we know ourselves; and if we know so much wickedness by ourselves, that we cannot but condemn ourselves, (though every man is a favourable judge of himself), God, who knows a great deal more of us, must condemn us also: but if our conscience condemn us not, if it acquit and absolve, *then have we confidence towards God*, a great and sure hope in God's mercy, that he will not condemn us. We cannot have the confidence of innocent men, because we have been sinners; but we may have the humble confidence, and assured hopes of returning and repenting prodigals, and of dutiful and obedient children.

That this is so the Apostle's authority is sufficient to convince us;

and yet if the Apostle had not said it, the reason and nature of the thing sufficiently proves it.

God has given us a certain rule whereby we shall be judged, which I have now explained to you: and therefore, since God will judge us by this rule, if we also judge ourselves by it, we may certainly know what judgment God will pass on us: for neither God nor our own consciences can mistake in their judgment. And when the rule is the same, and there can be no mistake on either side, the judgment must necessarily be the same; and then the same judgment our own consciences make of us God will make: if they condemn us, God will condemn us also; if they condemn us not, neither will God condemn us; then *we shall have confidence towards God.*

There needs no proof of this, if you will but confess that every man knows himself, what his own life and actions are, and that God knows every man better than he knows himself. If we know ourselves, and know our rule; if we know what we ought to do, and what we have done, we can certainly tell whether we have done our duty or not. If our consciences condemn us, it is certain we have not done our duty; that we either do what we know we ought not to do, or leave undone what we know we ought to do; for no man in his wits will accuse himself wrongfully. Now, if this be our case, our consciences do very justly condemn us; and then God, who knows us as perfectly as our own consciences, must condemn us also: for a guilty sinner, who is guilty to his own conscience, can never escape the condemnation of a just and righteous judge, if he knew his guilt.

Did earthly princes, or judges, as certainly know the crimes which every particular man is guilty of as God knows the sins of all men, with their particular circumstances and aggravations, every malefactor, who knows what law he has broken, and what is the punishment of the breach of such laws, might certainly know what his condemnation will be if he meet with a righteous judge.

But earthly judges do not always know men's personal guilt, or want evidence to prove it; and thus many criminals, whose own consciences condemn them, may escape the condemnation of men; but God knows more of us than our own consciences, and needs no other evidence against us but our own consciences to condemn us. Earthly judges are not always upright in their judgment, fear or favour may pervert their justice: but God is the Judge of all the world, and, therefore, supreme rectitude and justice; that no sinner can hope to escape his justice whose own conscience condemns him; for if God should not condemn such men, he would be less just than the conscience of a sinner.

But you will say, The mercy of God, and the merits of our Saviour, may pardon a sinner whose conscience condemns him, though justice

cannot. I answer, No: If conscience condemns according to the rule of the gospel, it condemns both for the justice and for the mercy of God; for the gospel is the gospel of grace, and contains all the mercy that God hath promised to sinners; and if conscience, judging by this rule, condemns a sinner, the mercy of God will not save; to be sure gospel-grace and mercy, his own conscience being witness, cannot save him, and, therefore, his salvation is hopeless while he continues in this state. No man's conscience, which is not disturbed, or misguided, (of which more presently), will absolutely condemn him without some notorious and manifest guilt, and the mercy of the gospel cannot save such a man: he must be conscious to himself that he lives in the commission of some known sin, or in the habitual neglect of some known duties, without repentance and reformation, before he will peremptorily condemn himself; and the grace of the gospel will not pardon wilful, impenitent, unreformed sinners.

Thus, on the other hand, "if our consciences do not condemn us, then have we confidence towards God." If we have "a conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards man:" if we have "the testimony of our consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in this world:" if we serve God with such zeal, and vigour, and activity; if we so "abound in the work of the Lord," in all the fruits of righteousness, goodness, and charity, that our own consciences approve and commend us for it; this will give us a secure hope in God's mercy, such a hope "as will not make us ashamed," as will not deceive us. Though "we know nothing by ourselves," as St. Paul speaks, "yet are we not hereby justified; he that judges us is the Lord," 1 Cor. iv. 4. In this case it is true also, that "God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things;" and, therefore he may observe those defects and imperfections in us which we do not observe in ourselves; that the most innocent and virtuous man dares not challenge heaven as his merit and desert, but yet expects and hopes for a reward from the mercies of God, has "confidence towards God."

A man's own conscience cannot deceive him in this: every man must know whether he carefully avoid all known and wilful sins, whether he discharge all essential parts of his duty to God and men; especially, when he does any eminent services for God, and becomes an example of piety and virtue. A man whose conscience gives this testimony to him, may securely hope and rejoice in God; for whatever other defects the pure eyes of God may see in him, they are all within the grace and mercy of the gospel, and therefore cannot hinder his pardon, or his reward.

Thus we see, that when conscience absolutely condemns, or when,

without any doubt and hesitancy, it commends, acquits, and absolves, its sentence is a divine oracle, and assures us what our judgment shall be at the last day, if we be then found in such a state. But there is a middle state between these two, which deserves to be considered. When men are neither so wicked as to be absolutely condemned by their own consciences, nor so good as to be acquitted and absolved, which is an uncertain state between hope and fear: this is the case of those men who have been guilty of very great sins, which they had lived in many years; and though they are very sensible of their past wickedness, and heartily sorry for their sins, and seriously resolved by the grace of God to forsake them, yet they are not satisfied of the sincerity of their repentance, because they have not (with all their sorrow and resolutions) conquered their inclinations to sin, nor broken the habits of it; but are guilty of frequent relapses, and fall into the commission of the same sins again, and then repent and resolve again; and as time wears off their sorrow for their past offence, their old inclinations revive, and a new temptation conquers again. Now, such men's consciences neither absolutely condemn nor absolutely acquit them, for the event is doubtful; they are not conquerors yet, and it is uncertain whether ever they will conquer; and, therefore, their consciences cannot yet speak peace to them: and yet they are not perfect slaves and captives to sin, but contend for their liberty, and therefore their consciences do not absolutely condemn them; but as they prevail or yield, so their hopes or fears increase.

And this also is the case of those men who, if they commit no notorious wickedness, yet do very little good, nothing that their consciences can commend them for; who worship God rather in compliance with the custom of the place they live in than from a vital sense and reverence of God, and therefore are not for any works of supererogation: and little will content them, and they are glad of any excuse to lessen that little; and all men who pretend to greater devotion they suspect of hypocrisy, and some secular interests.

As for charity, though they must own charity to be a virtue, yet when any particular act of charity is pressed on them, they never want arguments to prove, either that it is not charity, or that they are not concerned in it: whatever kindnesses they do for others are extorted by great importunity, and done very thriftily, just as men do what they have no mind nor inclination to. Now, these men are commonly pretty quiet and secure, unless something extraordinary awaken them; for they do nothing greatly to terrify their conscience, nor any thing to please them; and, therefore, their consciences neither absolve nor condemn. Such men do not well know what to think of themselves, nor do they much think of these matters: if they be gay, and in good

humour, all is very well; if any cross accident disturbs them, and makes them thoughtful, and fall out with this world, or works upon a melancholy constitution, then they are over-run with black and dismal thoughts, and all the ministers in the neighbourhood are sent for to answer cases of conscience, and to speak such comfort to them as their own consciences cannot, and will not speak.

Now this case our Apostle took no notice of, for indeed nothing is to be said to it; such men cannot know by the judgment of their own consciences what judgment God will pass on them, because their consciences pass no certain judgment on them: but when conscience does give judgment of us, when it absolutely acquits or absolutely condemns us, we may depend on it that God will judge us as our consciences do.

There are some objections against this, which are easily answered, from that plain state of the case which I have now given. As to name some.

There are a great many very bad men, who go on in their sins without any checks and rebukes of their own consciences, much more without being condemned by them; and will not God condemn these men, because their own consciences do not condemn them? Yes, no doubt he will; for he will condemn all bad men, whether their own consciences at present condemn them or not. But by *not condemning*, the Apostle means acquitting and absolving; which these men's consciences do not. Though they do not condemn, they do not commend, nor absolve neither; that is, they pass no judgment at all, but are feared and stupified by Atheism, or a long custom in sinning. When conscience does judge, and does not condemn, God will not condemn neither: but there is a great difference between not judging and not condemning; and therefore, notwithstanding what the Apostle says, God may condemn when conscience does not judge, though he will not condemn when a judging conscience does not condemn. And the difference between these two, between not judging and not condemning, is very evident; for it is often seen, that men, whose consciences have given them no disturbance for many years in a course of sin, that is, have never judged them, yet whenever their consciences are awakened, (as they sometimes are by severe providences, or, at least, by the approach of death), then they condemn them, and fill them with terror and amazement.

There are other bad men, who do very wicked things, and yet their consciences are so far from condemning them, that they commend and applaud them. Nay, we know there have been those whose consciences have indulged them in all manner of wickedness, and flattered them into an opinion of their being great saints, and dear to God all the while; and will not God condemn these men because their con-

sciences do not condemn them, but promise them not only impunity, but great rewards?

Thus, on the other hand, many very good men, who, to all appearance, have lived very innocent and virtuous lives, fall under great disorders of mind, and not only condemn but pass a final irreversible sentence upon themselves, that they are not only at present in a state of damnation, but that it is impossible for them ever to get out of it, and that they must be certainly damned: now, will God condemn these good men, because their consciences condemn them?

I have put these two cases together, because the same answer will serve both. This is not the judgment of conscience, which St. John speaks of; but the judgment of opinion, and mistaken notions in religion, or of melancholy and a distempered fancy.

The judgment of conscience is that judgment which we pass on ourselves, from comparing our lives with the rule whereby we shall be judged; and this judgment cannot deceive us: for if we judge of ourselves by the same rule by which God will judge us, every man knows himself so well, that he cannot mistake; and when God and conscience judge by the same rule, their judgment must be the same: but if we will alter our rule of judging; if conscience judge by one rule, and God by another, then there is no wonder if their judgments differ; if God condemn those whose consciences acquit them, and absolve those whose consciences, or rather, whose private opinions and fancies, condemn them.

This is plain from the instances before us. Some men justify themselves in doing very wicked actions; but the reason is, because they mistake the nature of things; they call good evil, and evil good; and then their consciences applaud and commend them for doing that which is very wicked, but which they call good. As our Saviour tells his apostles, "The time cometh, when every one that killeth you will think that he does God good service," *John xvi. 2.*

Others, who know they are guilty of very great wickedness, are yet very confident of their salvation, and full of assurance; because they do not judge of themselves by the good or evil which they do, but rely upon other marks and evidences for their salvation; raptures, ecstasies, enthusiasms, a presumptuous faith in Christ, an ineffectual sorrow for sin, some arbitrary and fanciful signs of election, &c. Now, indeed, these men's consciences do condemn them, for they accuse them of great wickedness, but they will not believe the judgment of their own consciences, but judge of their final state by their own mistaken fancy and opinion; and therefore, according to the Apostle's rule, God will condemn these men, for their own consciences condemn them;

though they will not believe the judgment of their consciences, but justify themselves in contradiction to it, when conscience condemns.

Other men, who are not condemned by their own consciences, that is, who cannot charge themselves with any great guilt; who are not conscious to themselves that they have lived in any known sin, or in the habitual neglect of any material and essential part of their duty, yet they strongly fancy that God will condemn them; that they are under sentence of reprobation; that they have sinned against the Holy Ghost, though what that sin is they know not: they want the testimony of the Spirit to assure them of their election: they have never felt the spirit of bondage, and therefore they fear they have not the Spirit of adoption, that is, they have never felt the horrors and agonies of guilty sinners, because, by the grace of God, and the blessing of a pious and virtuous education, they have always been preserved from those frightful sins which amaze the conscience, and therefore they fear it is but a false peace they feel; that God is not in this soft and calm voice of conscience, because they have never heard nor seen the thunders and lightnings from Mount Sinai: or though they maintain a great reverence for God, and worship him with all humility of soul and body, yet they do not feel those flights of devotion, those melting and languishing passions, which some good men feel: or if at any time they are transported beyond themselves, and feel their hearts all on fire with love and devotion, these fits are but short; these boilings and fermentations go off, and they return to a calm and even temper; and then they think they grow cold, and that the Spirit of God hath forsaken them. Now, it is plain also, that these men's consciences do not condemn them, for they charge them with no such guilt as the gospel of Christ will condemn them for; but they are condemned only by false opinions, or by a misguided and disturbed fancy. In both these cases men absolve or condemn themselves, not by the judgment and testimony of conscience, but by their mistaken notions and opinions, and God is not concerned to confirm and to ratify such a judgment.

The sum is this: When St. John tells us, that if our conscience condemn us, God will condemn us; but if our conscience do not condemn us, neither will God condemn us; he means by *conscience*, that judgment which men make of themselves, by comparing their lives and actions with the rule by which God will judge us; for conscience judges, not by making new and arbitrary rules of judgment, but by giving testimony to our lives and actions. The judgment of conscience is no more but this, whether we have obeyed or disobeyed the laws of the gospel; whether we have done those things which the gospel threatens to punish, or which it promises to reward. But when we judge our actions by false notions of good and evil, contrary to the gospel

of our Saviour, we judge by a false rule, and then our judgment must be false: and when we judge ourselves, not by the nature of our works; (as God will judge us, and as conscience judges), but by opinions and fancies, and some arbitrary and enthusiastic marks and signs, this is not the judgment of conscience, which judges only of our works, but the judgment of private opinions, conceits and fancies; and though God will judge us as conscience judges, yet he will not judge us as opinion, fancy, enthusiasm, or melancholy, judge us.

Thus we see how we may know what our sentence shall be at the day of judgment. Two sorts of men may certainly know what their sentence shall be; and a third sort may know the great danger they are in if they will but listen to the judgment of their own conscience. Men whose consciences absolutely condemn them may certainly expect that God will condemn them: for when their guilt is so notorious that they are forced to condemn themselves, why should they think that a just and righteous judge will not condemn them? Those whose consciences do not condemn them shall certainly be pardoned and rewarded by the mercies of God. Those whose consciences will neither condemn nor absolve them, but do both by turns, are in a very doubtful and hazardous state; their salvation as yet is very uncertain; and it concerns them to "work out their salvation with fear and trembling; and to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure."

And should not this teach us to reverence the judgment of conscience as a divine sentence? Not to provoke our consciences to condemn us; to obey their admonitions, and to reform at their rebukes and censures? What would sinners think, should they hear themselves condemned by God every time they commit a known and wilful sin? And yet conscience is the tribunal of God, judges for God, and condemns us in God's name, and by his authority; and God will confirm and execute its sentence: and therefore conscience is a very venerable judge.

And ought we not diligently to hearken to that judgment which conscience passes on us? This, I am sure, is of vast concernment both to bad and to good men, whether it condemn or absolve. Bad men indeed are very much afraid of their own consciences, because they reprove and condemn them, and threaten them with hell-fire; and therefore they fly from their consciences, will not hear them, and will not suffer them to speak. But what do they get by this, but to drop securely and quietly into hell; and then conscience will speak, and never be silent more. If they will not hear their consciences now, they must hear their Judge at the last day. Though conscience be never so severe in its reproofs and censures, they are the reproofs of a

friend; the judgment of conscience is only to warn us of the judgment of God, to warn us to fly from the wrath to come: and would men hearken to their own consciences, it would give check to them, and reform their lives: if we would patiently hear conscience threaten us with hell-fire, it would be the most effectual means to prevent our falling into it.

But what is the joy and triumph of a good conscience, which speaks peace to us, and gives us a secure hope in God; which gives us the joyful prospect of eternal rewards, of a crown, and a kingdom; of those rivers of pleasures which are at God's right hand! When, with St. Paul, we can say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God the righteous Judge will give me at that day," 2 *Tim.* iv. 7, 8.

This is a happy state indeed; a plerophory and full assurance of hope; which makes good men impatiently long for the day of judgment, to be put into the possession of so great a happiness! And there is no way to have this but from the testimony of our own conscience. The Holy Spirit does indeed give testimony to good men, and fill them "with joys unspeakable, and full of glory:" but then "the Spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God," *Rom.* viii. 16. Unless our consciences give testimony to us, the Holy Spirit never does: all pretences to the testimony of the Spirit without this are cheats and delusions. And conscience will never give this testimony to us without a tried and experienced virtue, till the flesh be subdued to the spirit; till our minds are refined and purified, and our conversations adorned with all divine and heavenly graces. Every new conquest we gain over this world, every new degree of strength and vigour in serving God, our increase in charity and all good works, will add new degrees to our hope; our consciences will give more ample testimony to us; and that gives us greater confidence towards God, which will make us joyfully expect "that blessed hope and glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

T H E E N D.



